

OMAN-BRITAIN FRIENDSHIP STANDS UNSHAKEN

I N H O N O U R O F H M , K I N G C H A R L E S H O S T S S T A T E B A N Q U E T

IN HONOUR OF HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK, His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom, hosted a state banquet at Windsor Castle on Tuesday evening, attended by Her Majesty Queen Camilla, on the occasion of His Majesty's state visit to the United Kingdom.

Ahead of the state banquet, His Majesty the Sultan, His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen shook hands with the guests invited to the dinner.

The evening's proceedings opened with an address delivered by His Majesty King Charles III, in which he said: "Your Majesty, Your Highnesses, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is always a treasured moment to receive such dear and old friends on a special Visit such as this. And whilst I know just how familiar you are with these shores, Your Majesty, my wife and I take the utmost pleasure in welcoming you back to Windsor Castle this evening. And let me say, (Welcome to a visitor of whom one never tires.)

Oman is one of Britain's oldest allies and, after all these years, I pray, one of your closest friends. And from this privileged position we recognise that a thousand years before our countrymen first met – a millennium before there was even a United Kingdom – Omani mariners were already trading across the Indian Ocean to extend Oman's great frankincense trails, which had already stretched across Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean for a thousand years before that – and, indeed, a thousand years before that! This does, I must say, put some of our own claims to seafaring prowess into true perspective!



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So, from Britain's very first meetings with these renowned Omani merchants, our friendship grew from the sea: as maritime partners in the seventeenth century; treaty partners in the eighteenth; strategic partners in the nineteenth; brothers-in-arms in the twentieth; and today, in the twenty-first century, we are bonded by diplomacy, defence, trade and trust.

For my own part, I have been immensely fortunate – and blessed – to come to know Oman over many years and many visits, including spending precious moments, escorted from time to time by Your Majesty, I seem to remember, trying to paint the breathtaking landscape of Oman; a landscape which was well-described by the great fourteenth Century explorer Ibn Battuta as being "most striking in beauty".

- HM APPRECIATES EXCEPTIONALLY WARM WELCOME
- OMAN, BRITAIN BROUGHT CLOSER CENTURIES AGO
- STRONG PARTNERSHIP IN THE MILITARY SPHERE
- EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE BUILT A BOND OF TRUST
- YOUNG OMANIS PURSUING STUDIES IN UK INSTITUTIONS
- CULTURAL EXCHANGE ENRICHED BY BRITISH TOURISTS
- BRITAIN AMONG OMAN'S LARGEST TRADING PARTNERS
- OMAN SUPPORTS DIALOGUE AND PEACE IN THE REGION

His Majesty accorded official reception at Windsor Castle



AN OFFICIAL RECEPTION CEREMONY was held in honour of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik at Windsor Castle on Tuesday on the occasion of His Majesty's state visit to the friendly United Kingdom (UK).

Ahead of the official reception ceremony, His Royal Highness Prince William of Wales greeted His Majesty the Sultan at His Majesty's residence. Prince of Wales expressed his delight at this gracious visit.

The royal procession, accompanied by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, then proceeded to Datchet road, where a squadron of British Royal Cavalcade lined both sides of the road in welcome of the auspicious arrival of His Majesty the Sultan. Upon the arrival of the royal procession at the Dais of Honour, His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom and Her Majesty

HM and King of United Kingdom exchange orders

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth, exchanged orders at Windsor Castle on Tuesday on the occasion of His Majesty's state visit to the friendly United Kingdom, reflecting the depth of the enduring historical relations between the two countries. His Majesty the King conferred upon His Majesty the Sultan the Order of the Garter, while His Majesty the Sultan conferred upon His Majesty the King the Order of Al Said. His Majesty the Sultan also conferred upon Her Majesty Queen Camilla the Order of Oman 'First Class.'

Queen Camilla stood at the forefront of those receiving His Majesty the Sultan.

HISTORICAL RELATIONS His Majesty King Charles III welcomed His Majesty the Sultan, expressing the utmost pride in this gracious visit, which affirms the depth of the firmly rooted historical relations between the two friendly countries and the close bonds that unite them. He wished His Majesty the Sultan and his accompanying delegation a visit crowned with success and prosperity.

In welcome of His Majesty the Sultan, the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery fired forty-one-gun salute from the inner courtyard of Windsor Castle, while the Honourable Artillery Company fired forty-one-gun salute. His Majesty the Sultan then shook hands with senior British officials receiving him.

SEE ALSO P2, 3, 4 AND 5

HIS MAJESTY ACCORDED OFFICIAL

RECEPTION AT WINDSOR CASTLE



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His Majesty the Sultan then shook hands with senior British officials receiving him, namely Andrew Try, Lord-Lieutenant of His Majesty the King in the Royal County of Berkshire; Councillor Sian Martin, Mayor of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and a number of British officials.

The Royal Horse Guards then rendered the royal salute to His Majesty the Sultan, and the Omani Royal Anthem was played.

Thereafter, Lord Ashton of Hyde, Master of the Horse, accompanied His Majesty the Sultan and His Majesty King Charles III to the principal royal carriage, while members of the official delegation boarded the carriages designated for them. Then, the royal procession set off in a celebratory march toward Windsor Castle.

Upon the arrival of the royal carriage at the outer courtyard of Windsor Castle, a number of Omani students in the United Kingdom lined up, expressing their joy at the visit of His Majesty the Sultan.

As the principal royal carriage entered Windsor Castle, the Guard of Honour rendered the royal salute, and the Omani Royal Anthem and the British Royal Anthem were played.

His Majesty the Sultan then inspected the Guard of Honour, accompanied by His Majesty the King. The two monarchs witnessed military parade formations staged by the Royal Horse Artillery and the King's Life Guard.

A reception was also held for His Majesty the Sultan at Windsor Castle, where His Majesty shook hands with His Royal Highness Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester and His Royal Highness Prince Edward and his spouse Her Royal Highness Princess Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh.

His Majesty the King then shook hands with members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan. — ONA

HM TOURS ROYAL COLLECTION EXHIBITION AT WINDSOR CASTLE

WINDSOR: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Tuesday toured the Royal Collection exhibition at Windsor Castle,

accompanied by His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom. His Majesty the Sultan viewed the wealth of historical artefacts

that reflect a facet of the heritage embodying the venerable relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom.

His Majesty the Sultan was accompanied during the tour by the official delegation accompanying His Majesty.



OMAN-BRITAIN FRIENDSHIP STANDS UNSHAKEN

FROM P1

As the great Omani poet Abu Muslim al Bahlani described so wonderfully, (May those gardens remain ever green, their breezes fragrant with peace.)

Over these decades, I was privileged to know your distinguished predecessor and my dear friend and brother, His late Majesty Sultan Qaboos, who so successfully transformed Oman whilst preserving your ancient culture, and who pursued, with remarkable wisdom, a foreign policy founded on openness and dialogue. We, in Britain, owe so much to his inspired leadership, and I hold in great affection the memories of the many meetings I had with him ever since my first visit to your country forty-six years ago.

Within Oman, Your Majesty has strengthened the institutions of the State and started the important journey of diversifying and decarbonising Oman's economy through your Vision 2040. Thanks to your energetic and far-sighted leadership, this national renewal, pursued with quiet determination, has put the importance of skills and education at the very heart of your development. In doing so you have most thoughtfully placed Oman's young people as the central driving force of your nation's future innovation, growth and progress.

If I may, Your Majesty, I would especially like to recognise, at a time when conflict has returned so painfully to the region, Oman's enduring commitment as a trusted interlocutor to all parties. Oman's noble efforts in trying to keep open one of the world's most important shipping routes have been of great service to the whole international community, and particularly to the most vulnerable of those affected.

Alongside others from the region, we stood with you in conflict over fifty years ago. This experience, and the years since, have helped us understand the depth of relationships in the region and the complexity of issues, and, through your eyes, an insight into where common ground might be found. Oman's role across the Gulf and her "constructive neutrality", as you put it, matters far beyond Hormuz, and is worthy of our utmost respect.

As the Prophet Muhammad said of the character of the people of Oman:

(Had you gone to the people of Oman, they would neither have insulted nor struck you.)

The unique and special relationship we share helps to make the world and our peoples safe. We are all exceptionally proud of the Loan Service Officers who serve in both our nations, and we are deeply grateful for the hospitality offered by Oman to our Armed Forces, including that which Your Majesty's Armed Forces Association extends to British veterans whose own contribution to Oman is so important to us all.

In your future, too, Britain is deeply invested – as you are so actively in ours.

Our connections matter deeply and, in this regard, I have been especially delighted to see our sons, The Prince of Wales and His Highness Sayyid Theyazin, become joint patrons of the Jewel of Arabia expedition. Your Majesty, there can be few happier symbols of success than a living relationship being passed from one generation to the next.

Ladies and gentlemen, the rich variety of the cultural organisations which connect our countries, are evidence that our students and sons, scientists and soldiers, investors and sailors, merchants and authors, walk in the footsteps of Bertram Thomas and Salim bin Kalut in binding together Britain and Oman as we continue to explore together the vast Empty Quarters of our modern world.

Your Majesty, neither of us can know precisely what challenges our successors will face. Despite our constant efforts, climate change will regrettably alter the lands and seas they inherit. Artificial



Though separated by a great distance, Oman and Britain were brought closer centuries ago by the voyages of Omani seafarers and British ships, whose encounters across the seas helped weave the enduring bond of friendship between our two nations. Today, the ship of our friendship continues to sail on, whatever storms may come

**HIS MAJESTY
SULTAN
HAITHAM BIN
TARIK**

Intelligence holds both promise and peril – unless managed with great wisdom and foresight. Competition for resources will test the international order in ways we cannot yet foresee.

But this much we do know: our successors will rely on trusted friends. They will need allies prepared to work together across difference; to defend peace and international law; to marry innovation with stewardship; and to think not merely about the next year, but about generations to come.

For centuries, Oman and Britain have done precisely that. In the Treaty we signed in 1800, our predecessors hoped that the friendship between our two states would remain "unshook till the end of time".

It was an ambitious promise but, more than two hundred years later, it has proved to be a promise fulfilled by the living connections between Britain and Oman, embodied in the generations of relationships that have forged an unshakable friendship between us.

Your Majesty, I hope this State Visit shows the importance the United Kingdom attaches to Oman, to its Monarchy and institutions, and to our friendship with you personally.

May I convey upon you the blessing written by the great Omani poet Shaykh al Baiyaan,

(May you live in fulfilment, sustained by blessings without end from your Lord, the Giver.)"

His Majesty the Sultan then delivered an address on this occasion, in which he said:

"Your Majesty King Charles, Your Majesty the Queen, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, distinguished guests,

Allow me, first of all, to express my sincere appreciation for your gracious words and for the exceptionally warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to me and my delegation. Such gestures reflect not only your personal kindness but also the genuine spirit of friendship and generosity that we value so deeply. It is a great pleasure to be here at Windsor Castle, a place that reflects the rich history and enduring traditions of the United Kingdom.

Though separated by a great distance, Oman and Britain were brought closer centuries ago by the voyages of Omani seafarers and British ships, whose encounters across the seas helped weave the enduring bond of friendship between our two nations. Today, the ship of our friendship continues to sail on, whatever storms may come.

This longstanding relationship found formal expression in 1800, when Oman and Great Britain signed a treaty declaring that "the friendship of the two states may remain unshook till the end of time, and till the sun and the moon have finished their revolving career." More than two hundred and twenty years have passed. The sun and the

moon still revolve. And that friendship still stands, unshaken.

Although our circumstances and responsibilities may sometimes differ, mutual respect has remained the defining feature of our relationship. This distinguished feature is reflected in the joint work being carried out by both countries.

Nowhere is this partnership stronger than in the military sphere. Omani and British forces have served side by side for generations: training together, standing guard together, and learning from one another. Our officers have studied in Britain's finest military academies, and British officers have served in Oman. This exchange of knowledge and experience has built a bond of readiness and trust that no treaty alone could create. It is a living relationship, tested, proven, and enduring.

The same spirit lives in the classrooms and campuses. Every year, young Omanis join Britain's finest educational institutions to pursue studies across a wide range of disciplines. They learn from your scholars, they walk your historic streets, and they come to know the British people, not as a distant ally, but as a friend. They are building our nation, and they are building a bridge between the people of both countries that grows stronger with every generation.

I have personally had the benefit of this, and I remain grateful. As a young man, I became familiar with that punctual national habit well known as English time.

At the same time, The British Council, the growing number of English-language schools, and the prospect of establishing more British educational institutions in Oman will further strengthen these ties. Such cultural exchange is enriched also by British tourists who come to discover Oman's charm, its rich history and its vibrant culture. I am confident that future generations can experience this relationship as a living connection between our peoples.

That brings me to the welcome news that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has graciously agreed to join His Highness Sayyid Theyazin to serve as Patrons of the British Omani Society.

Beyond military and education cooperation, trade remains an important bridge between our two nations. Britain has long been among Oman's largest trading partners and indeed the single largest contributor to foreign direct investment.

Your Majesty, in a region that has known too much conflict, Oman has chosen a different path, an independent path; we take positions for dialogue, for understanding and for peace. A wise nation chooses to listen. Oman has chosen to listen. And in that listening, we have found a strength that armies cannot provide. We seek solutions. We believe in diplomacy, in dialogue, and in the patient work of bringing nations together. This is our heritage. Britain has been a friend on this path, and has stood beside us in this duty, not with armies, but with wisdom.

Your Majesty, Your commitment to young people, environmental protection, and interfaith dialogue reflects a profound sense of responsibility towards society and future generations. These are the values we in Oman have long held dear, and principles that continue to guide our approach to leadership and our engagement with the world.

Let me conclude with a prayer: may God bless Your Majesty with health and long life, and preserve the friendship between our two nations, a friendship that, like the shining sun and glowing moon, shall never finish its revolving career.

To the health and long life of His Majesty the King."

The dinner was attended by the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan, members of the British Royal Family and senior officials. — **ONA**

In honour of HM, King Charles hosts state banquet



PRINCE WILLIAM OF WALES WELCOMES HIS MAJESTY



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OMAN

SHORT TAKES



Experts from the Omani Centre for Regulating Organ and Human Tissue Donation and Transplantation and the Spanish Donation and Transplantation Institute during the visit. — **ONA**

EXPERTS CHART PATH TO STRONGER ORGAN DONATION SYSTEM

MUSCAT: The Omani Centre for Regulating Organ and Human Tissue Donation and Transplantation, in cooperation with experts from the Spanish Donation and Transplantation Institute, discussed ways to develop organ donation services in the Sultanate of Oman following brain death, as well as enhancing performance efficiency and the quality of health services.

The visit aimed to exchange international expertise, review applied practices and procedures, and develop and introduce key performance indicators to measure service quality and efficiency, alongside discussing challenges and development opportunities with specialists and healthcare personnel. It comes within the framework of joint cooperation aimed at unifying practices, improving performance and maximising the utilisation of donated organs, thereby contributing to the development of the organ donation and transplantation system in Oman. — **ONA**

OMAN, KUWAIT REVIEW SECURITY TIES



MUSCAT: Maj Gen Abdullah bin Ali al Harthi, Assistant Inspector General of Police, Customs for Operations, received on Tuesday Colonel Mosa'ad Ahmed al Shamroukh from the Ministry of Defence in the State of Kuwait and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed aspects of joint cooperation and discussed means of enhancing the exchange of expertise and experiences in security fields, emergency management and multi-hazard risk reduction. The delegation visited the National Centre for Emergency Management and several sectors of the National Committee for Emergency Management, during which they were briefed on the working mechanism at the centre. — **ONA**

OMAN'S CHILD POPULATION SET TO REACH 1.5 MILLION BY 2040

MUSCAT: The total number of children in the Sultanate of Oman, aged 0-17, reached approximately 1.5 million in 2025, with Omani children accounting for around 84 per cent of the total, while the gender ratio among Omani children stood at 104 males per 100 females, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The data showed that the number of Omani children reached 1,294,206 in 2025, an increase of approximately 0.9 per cent compared with the previous year.

This figure is projected to reach around 1.5 million by 2040.

On health indicators, the total number of live births to Omani parents reached 63,252 in 2025, compared with 63,187 in 2024, while the crude birth rate among Omanis stood at 20.8 births per 1,000 population in 2025, compared with 21.2 in the previous year. In education, the number of Omani children enrolled in nurseries rose by 20 per cent compared with the previous year, reaching 8,044 in 2025.

On economic indicators, the

number of employed Omani children aged 15-17 reached 2,637 in 2025, with 25 per cent working in the construction sector, while 14,964 Omani children aged 0-17 owned one or more plots of land, a decrease of approximately 1 per cent compared with the previous year.

In social protection, the number of children benefiting from the Child Benefit reached 1,251,274 in 2025; the number of beneficiaries of the Orphan Benefit stood at 9,008; and 16,703 children aged 0-17 benefited from the benefit for persons with disabilities. — **ONA**

Oman to participate in COP31 climate conference

THE Sultanate of Oman is preparing to participate in the 31st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31), scheduled to be held in the city of Antalya, Republic of Türkiye, from November 9-20.

The Sultanate of Oman's participation in the conference, which is considered one of the most prominent international forums concerned with climate action. The event comes at a time when global efforts are directed toward accelerating the implementation of climate commitments and pledges, enhancing the transition to clean energy, developing the circular economy, green manufacturing, and climate finance, as well as building ecosystems and infrastructure more capable of confronting the impacts of climate change.

The Environment Authority is working to enhance national participation readiness through coordination among supervision and governance, negotiation, media, Oman's pavilion, youth, innovation, indicators, and logistical support teams, ensuring the integration of efforts and highlighting national initiatives and climate priorities



Omani participation in COP31 constitutes an opportunity to showcase the national experience in environmental sustainability.

of the Sultanate of Oman during the conference sessions.

Omani participation rests upon a set of environmental indicators and achievements, most notably the Sultanate of Oman's advancement by 6 positions in the Global Environmental Performance Index for 2026 to rank 49th globally, compared to 55th in 2024.

Oman also ranked first globally in 6 sub-indicators within the Environmental Performance Index for 2026, which included household solid fuel consumption, sustainable solid waste management, wastewater treatment, species

habitats, reduction of open-water trawling, and the trend in sulphur dioxide emission reduction.

The circular economy sector witnessed development in the waste management system and its economic utilisation, with the volume of recycled municipal solid waste reaching 1.77 million tonnes nationally, while the number of recycling factories reached 85, alongside achieving 100 per cent in the safe management of solid waste and coverage of its transport and collection services.

The proportion of marine reserves within the Exclusive Economic Zone rose to 16.19

percent compared to a baseline of 0.33 per cent, exceeding the target set for 2030, while forest area reached 1.5 per cent of total land area compared to a baseline of 0.01 per cent, achieving the target set for 2030.

The number of natural reserves in Oman increased to 32 reserves during 2025, with a total area of approximately 187,276 square kilometres. Investments associated with reserves exceeded RO 44 million through 9 investment contracts across 7 reserves, enhancing the sustainable utilisation of natural assets and supporting investment opportunities in environmental activities.

Oman continues to implement blue carbon projects by targeting the cultivation of 100 million mangrove trees over an area reaching 20,000 hectares, with estimates of removing nearly 14 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, as part of efforts aimed at enhancing the capacity of coastal ecosystems to absorb carbon emissions and contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Omani environmental efforts received regional and international recognition, including an Arab honour in the Arab Excellence Award for 2025 in appreciation of leadership. — **ONA**

TENDER NOTICE

وزارة الزراعة والسمكية وموارد المياه
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tenders: -

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Document Sales Start Date	Tender Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Companies that are Eligible to Participate	Tender Document Fee (R.O)
698/2026/MAFWR/HQ-51	Service for the supply and installation of five (5) electric elevators at the Ministry's headquarters building in Al-Chuwar, and the dismantling and relocation of the old elevators to the Ministry's warehouses in Gala.	Monday 12/10/2026	Sunday 1/11/2026	Sunday 22/11/2026	SMEs Specialized companies registered with, Excellent, First, Second, Third, and Fourth grades	(10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
706/2026/MAFWR/HQ-52	Provision of Contract Labor Services for Loading, Unloading, and Bag Stacking for Food Security Departments.	Wednesday 14/10/2026	Monday 2/11/2026	Sunday 22/11/2026	SMEs Specialized companies registered with, Excellent, First, Second, Third and Fourth grades	(10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs

Interested Companies registered with The General Secretariat of the Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.

The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.

The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration for local companies.

All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.

All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: [+968 24402244](mailto:etenderhd@ptic.gov.om) or etenderhd@ptic.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

Recall

KIA Telluride (ON)

RECALL DATE: 21-10-2026

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production*	#Number of Affected Commodities
Telluride (ON)	19 Nov 2024 to 22 July 2025	28

*Not all vehicles in this production period, are affected.
#Subject to revision, based on the information received from the manufacturer, from time to time.

Recall consequence

On some Telluride (ON) models produced within specific production date range, the 1st row seat back side recliner frame may not support driver/passenger properly during rear collision due to improper manufacturing. The estimated defect ratio is 1%.

Recall Action

Verify affected vehicles as per the VIN list. Need to inspect the condition of 1st row seat backside recliner frame and replace 1st row seat back side recliner frame as per "Technical Service Bulletin" given by KMC.

SAUDI MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCES

الوزارة

تفاصيل الاتصال: يرجى الاتصال بـ: 24579800
أيام العمل: الأحد - الخميس
ساعات العمل: 8:30 - 12:30 ص.

الرقم: 093-03 SOP

التاريخ: 21 أكتوبر 2025

الإصدار: 04

Looking for job, car, flat and furniture? Check out the Observer classified page. It's where buyers meet sellers.

STUDENT CODERS PUT TO THE TEST

SAUD AL ANSARI
MUSCAT, OCT 20

THE OMAN University Programming Contest 2026 began at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) on Tuesday, bringing together 48 teams and 144 contestants to compete in programming and problem-solving challenges. Organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the two-day competition was held under the auspices of Dr Ali bin Amer al Shaithani, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, in the presence of HH Sayyid Dr Fahd bin al Julanda al Said, Vice-Chancellor of SQU. The contest aims to discover national talent in programming, develop analytical thinking and problem-solving skills, and prepare young Omanis to contribute to the country’s digital economy. Mahmoud bin Said al Majini, Head of Training Programmes at the ministry’s Future Skills Department and General Supervisor of the contest, said the competition plays an important role in honing students’ skills and preparing national competencies capable of using modern technologies and developing innovative solutions to meet the needs of the digital economy. He added that developing digital skills among Omani youth is a key pathway to strengthening their technical capabilities and encouraging them to participate in regional and international competitions. He said three Omani teams qualify annually to participate in these competitions,



Officials join contestants at the opening of the Oman University Programming Contest 2026 at Sultan Qaboos University on Tuesday.

highlighting the achievements of national teams in previous editions. Among their notable results were fifth and seventh places in a cybersecurity competition introduced as part of a competition for African and Arab universities, which attracted 152 teams from around the world. Omani school students have also achieved promising results in informatics competitions, with one team securing seventh place in the Future Programmer competition held in Jordan, which brought together more than 57 teams from across the Arab world. Dr Sultan bin Salim al Yahyai, Regional Director of the Oman University Programming Contest, said the competition focuses on skills that computer science and programming students need to develop in the age of artificial intelligence (AI). “Artificial intelligence undoubtedly provides us with more powerful and faster tools. At the same time, our ability to ask the right questions, understand results, identify errors and make sound decisions has become more important than ever,” he said. The contest is being implemented in cooperation with the Programming Academy.

وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مناقصة
Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology invites for the Following Tender:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
131/2026/ MTCIT	CONSULTANCY SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR THE ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROPOSALS FOR INVESTMENT ROAD PROJECTS	19-10-2026	2-11-2026	23-11-2026	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE PROJECT, TENDERS AND LOCAL CONTENT AUTHORITY (EXCELLENT AND FIRST CLASSES)	(25/-) TWENTY-FIVE OMANI RIALS (LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMPANIES) (10/-) TEN OMANI RIALS (SMEs) NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. Tenders should be submitted online on given website

CORRESPONDANCE:

- Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
- E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200, e-mail: etenderhd@ptlc.gov.om

INTERNAL TENDERS COMMITTEE

@mtcitoman www.mtcit.gov.om

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CONDOLENCES

THE CHAIRMAN, MANAGEMENT TEAM AND STAFF OF
AL RIYAMI GROUP
EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES TO THE
BEREAVED FAMILY ON THE SAD DEMISE OF

Mr. P. R. Subramanian
Executive Director (Business & Finance)
on 16th October 2026.

We pray to the Almighty to give them strength and courage to overcome this loss.

He will always be remembered as a visionary pioneer who laid the foundation for the growth and success of the Group companies.

Oman Pumps Mfg. & Engineering Services Co. (SAOC)

Oman Water Treatment Co. S.A.O.C

Al Farabi Pharmacy

Structural Engineering Services & Trading LLC

وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية
Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of **Ministry of Social Development** hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)	
					Small and Medium Companies	Local Companies
534/2026	Contracting work for the project to establish a water treatment unit at the Al-Wafa Center for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in Izki	Companies specialized in the field of urban contracting and maintenance and registered primarily with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with first degree	Sunday 8/11/2026 02:00 PM	Sunday 29/11/2026 02:00 PM	10 R.O	25 R.O
535/2026	Specifications for the design and implementation of wooden works for the office of Her Excellency the Doctor and for the agreement signing square	Companies specialized in the field of urban contracting and maintenance and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with excellent degree	Sunday 08/11/2026 02:00 PM	Sunday 29/11/2026 02:00 PM	10 R.O	25 R.O

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). On **Tuesday 20/10/2026**.

❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200).

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OPINION

We encourage their independence until they question us



HYESHA BARRETT

The writer is a Master Life Coach and Positive Parent Specialist

WE OFTEN speak proudly of raising the next generation to become confident, capable and independent thinkers. We encourage children to be curious, express themselves and develop their own identities. However, there is an interesting contradiction in how we sometimes approach this. We celebrate their independence until it begins to challenge our expectations. Suddenly, the very qualities we hoped to nurture can become the ones we find most difficult to accommodate.

This month's Children and Family Forum in Muscat, held under the theme "Every child is an ambassador", offered a timely reminder of the importance of recognising children's voices, talents and potential. It is a powerful message that invites us to reflect on the future we are preparing our children for. However, it also invites us to look a little closer at what happens long before they become contributing members of society, within the everyday interactions of family life.

Consider how frequently children are encouraged to think for themselves, only to discover that certain answers are more acceptable than others. A child questions a family rule and is told not to argue. Another expresses discomfort with hugging a relative, and is reminded to be polite. A teenager disagrees with a parent's opinion and is accused of having an attitude. None of these responses necessarily come from a

place of ill intention. Often, they reflect the values, beliefs and expectations we inherited ourselves.

Somewhere along the way, however, children can begin to learn that having a voice is acceptable, provided it doesn't create discomfort for the adults around them. They become skilled at reading reactions, anticipating expectations and adjusting their responses accordingly. What looks like cooperation may sometimes be an attempt to preserve connection, avoid conflict, or secure approval. The question then becomes whether we are developing independent thinkers or simply children who have become very good at knowing what we want to hear.

Of course, encouraging children to express themselves doesn't mean abandoning boundaries or allowing every decision to become a negotiation. Children need guidance, structure and adults who can confidently hold limits. Yet, there is a fundamental difference between teaching children respect and teaching them obedience. A child can hold a different opinion without being disrespectful. They can feel disappointed without being ungrateful, question a decision without being defiant, and have a different perspective without rejecting the values of their family.

Perhaps the greater challenge rests in recognising what their independence brings up within us. When a child questions our decision, do we hear curiosity or criticism?

As we celebrate children's potential, perhaps we should consider whether we are equally committed to making room for their individuality. After all, raising a child who knows how to follow instructions is one thing.

When they say "no", do we experience it as information or a threat to our authority? Our reactions often reveal as much about our own relationship with control, respect and disagreement as they do about the child's behaviour. Learning to tolerate a different opinion without immediately needing to correct it is a skill many adults are still developing.

These seemingly ordinary exchanges carry significance far beyond childhood. We cannot reasonably expect young people to become confident decision makers, establish healthy boundaries or challenge harmful behaviour, if their early experiences repeatedly taught them that disagreement comes at the cost of being accepted. The ability to think independently develops through opportunities to practise, including the freedom to make mistakes, reconsider opinions and occasionally arrive at conclusions different from our own.

As we celebrate children's potential, perhaps we should consider whether we are equally committed to making room for their individuality.

After all, raising a child who knows how to follow instructions is one thing. Raising one who knows when to question them is quite another.

If we teach children that respect means never questioning authority, how will they recognise the moments when authority deserves to be questioned?

FRANCE’S TROUBLES
EXTEND BEYOND
THE STREET

MARC BURLEIGH

“Revolution!” some shouted during France’s protests. Others demanded better classroom conditions. Many simply wanted their household budgets to stop shrinking as fuel and food prices spike.

Some, meanwhile, relished confrontation. Masked youths battled police and seized a lawless opportunity to loot city stores of expensive sneakers and TVs.

France’s unrest is exposing deep political and economic fault lines ahead of next year’s presidential election, analysts say, strengthening anti-establishment forces while leaving the cash-strapped government with little room to respond.

It adds up to a grievous problem for President Emmanuel Macron, whose rise was partly made possible by the collapse of France’s traditional party system and whose presidency has coincided with further political fragmentation.

Analysts say the gap between what France’s citizens expect of the state and what the state can afford to deliver may become one of the defining issues of the post-Macron era. Previous governments might have tried to buy social peace. This one has far less room to do so.

“It’s difficult for the government to respond to the legitimate demands of students and others because it has no money,” analyst Muftaba Rahman, head of the Eurasia Group, said on X.

“And (it’s) impossible to respond to demands of the violent minority because they have none except ‘screw the system,’” he said. The profiles of those in, and on the margins of, the protests are as varied as their demands. One placard summed up the mood: “Everything’s fine, except everything.”

An unemployed former hotel employee who gave her first name as Oumy said, as she marched on the weekend, that she no longer believed in the government’s promises. “Everything is tough. We have dramatically tightened our belts,” she said.

Those frustrations reflected a feeling among many voters that they were unheard by traditional parties, while students and young workers expressed anxiety about future prospects. Yellow Vest demonstrators demanding action on inflation marched alongside students who had been blocking schools since late September. Hovering behind the economic grievances were familiar French arguments over immigration, policing, secularism and national identity. — Reuters

How aviation shaped the
Oman-UK relations

AT THE easternmost tip of the Arabian Peninsula lies Ras Al Hadd. Nearly a century ago, this remote headland became one of the places where Oman and Britain first met in the sky. Yet the aircraft that appeared over its shores did not begin the relationship between the two nations; they opened a new chapter in a friendship that was already centuries old.

Long before the age of aviation, Omani and British interests met on the trade routes of the Indian Ocean. Commercial contacts date back to the seventeenth century, and formal agreements followed in 1798 and 1800, later reinforced by treaties in 1891 and 1951. These agreements protected merchants and shipping and established a habit of consultation that would outlast empires.

In the late 1920s, Britain was developing an air route to India, and Oman's long coastline was essential to it. British records in the Qatar Digital Library show that work on landing grounds at Bait Al Falaj and Suhar had begun by 1929, and that permission for a landing ground at Ras Al Hadd was sought from Oman's Sultan in 1930. Flying boats such as the Supermarine Southampton became familiar sights along the coast. Every landing ground required the Sultan's approval, so aviation became an expression of the relationship rather than an imposition upon it.

On June 24, 1937, Sultan Said bin Taimur signed an oil concession agreement with Petroleum Concessions Ltd, opening a new era of commercial engagement. When exploration gathered pace after the Second World War, aircraft proved indispensable, flying geologists



ABDULAZIZ ALI AL KHARUSI

The author is Chairman, Memberships and Events Committee, Oman Historical Association

The landing ground at Ras Al Hadd was a modest undertaking, yet it captures something essential: two nations, separated by great distance, choosing time and again to meet, to agree and to build together



Th UK's Royal Air Forceflying boat moored off the coast of Old Muscat.

and equipment from Bait Al Falaj to remote fields such as Fahud. The first export of Omani crude in 1967 transformed the country's prospects.

The accession of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said in 1970 opened a period of rapid modernisation. Seeb International Airport opened in 1973, the year Oman joined the International Civil Aviation Organization. In 1974, Oman became a co-owner of Gulf Air, and the Anglo-French Concorde visited Muscat.

Diplomatic ties deepened in parallel. Queen Elizabeth II visited Oman in 1979 and again in 2010 for the Sultanate of Oman's fortieth National Day, which she later called a cherished memory. In December 2021, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik was received at Windsor Castle and held talks in Downing Street on economic recovery, green investment and trade. Today, the economic partnership is stronger than ever. According to Oman's National Centre for Statistics and Information, the United Kingdom was the Sultanate of Oman's largest foreign investor in 2025, with investment of some \$42

billion, roughly half of all foreign direct investment in the country. In 2022, the two countries signed a Sovereign Investment Partnership focused on clean energy and technology, and negotiations opened on a free trade agreement between the United Kingdom and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Aviation continues to carry this partnership forward. When Oman Air launched its first long-haul services in 2007, London was among its first destinations. Direct flights now carry investors, officials and families between the two capitals, along with generations of Omani students bound for British universities and British visitors eager to discover Oman.

From seventeenth-century merchants to twenty-first-century investors, the relationship has repeatedly renewed itself, by sail, by flying boat and by airliner. The landing ground at Ras Al Hadd was a modest undertaking, yet it captures something essential: two nations, separated by great distance, choosing time and again to meet, to agree and to build together.

Consistency beats intensity every time



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

The writer is a senior editor of Observer

KNOW a person who is known for his consistency. You might think he is predictable. The best part is that he is never spiralling around. He knows exactly what to do when. There is so much calmness then.

I, on the other hand, will remember what I forgot while working on another project.

I recently watched a friend cook and felt it was so meditative. She was speaking to me peacefully and answering my questions while attending to her food on the stove. Life flowed smoothly with a gentle rhythm.

I suddenly felt empowered. When I cook for others, I am usually petrified, worried about what could go wrong. I remember the first time I fried something; my brother had to remove the battery from the fire alarm.

There are some individuals who learn cooking as a habit, just by watching the family members do it. It can build confidence. For others, it could be a trigger for stress. Food is nutrition and part of nurturing, so cooking is an essential skill, and it is better to make it our hobby.

For some people, it is communication skills that cause stress. We live in a society, and we need to interact, but our minds have their own ways of thinking. Dealing with people, whether in a classroom or an auditorium, requires one need — the need to be accepted. This can make us nervous or anxious.

There is one factor we forget, and that is that even the members of the audience are vulnerable, because everyone is quietly fighting their battles and complexes. Some are

trying to overcome the inferiority complex, while others are surfing on the superiority complex.

Whoever is going through either of these extremes tends to feel that people are avoiding them. It could be that other people are sensitive and do not want to go through painful experiences, and the result could be a lot of unhappy people.

The routine is a good thing, but if it is just another chore, then there is no magic to it. Instead, if it is something that makes you happy and smile, then there is every chance that the routine is going to be celebrated and form a habit. According to experts, there is a four-step framework to build a realistic routine that actually sticks.

This requires us to audit our day and to anchor our habits.

You know how we tend to add a new activity and give up in a few days’ time. The gym memberships we enrol in and never attend after a few days.

They say that instead of trying to find a brand-new block of time, habit stack — attach a new small wellness action to something you already do every single day.

While the morning coffee or tea is brewing, do two minutes of deep breathing or stretch your hamstrings.

Another example is while brushing your teeth at night. They say it is the best time to do a quick mental review of one good thing that happened today.

And then we need to cap activities at “micro-doses”.

There are some individuals who learn cooking as a habit, just by watching the family members do it. It can build confidence. For others, it could be a trigger for stress

Do you know why consistency beats intensity every time? I suppose it is because intensity is short-lived. Its very nature allows us only to indulge in it for a while. Consistency is more peaceful.

They say keeping our self-care practices remarkably small makes it feel impossible to fail at.

Five minutes of journaling or reading a book (not scrolling) sounds more practical and doable than writing a whole story or reading the whole book.

A brisk 10-minute walk during lunch or between meetings is manageable rather than beating the traffic to take a stroll at the beach.

So that is a look at mental and physical activities, but we also need to look at the emotional aspect, and that could be even saying “no” to one non-essential task or meeting this week.

One of the major factors in mental health issues is workplace burnout. The professional urge is to protect our transition buffers.

It seems burnout often happens because we bleed work into rest with zero transition. So what we actually need to create is a five-minute buffer between modes, and we need to have two transitions: morning and evening.

The morning transition is having at least five minutes of quiet time or looking out a window before checking our phone or email.

The evening transition is when we have to practise a “brain dump” on a notepad at the end of your workday — ‘To close open mental loops so you don’t carry stress into your personal life.’

UKRAINE RACES TO SECURE ENERGY SUPPLIES AHEAD OF WINTER

PHIL HAZLEWOOD

Hardly a day goes by now in Ukraine without news of another Russian air strike on the country’s energy sector, causing widespread blackouts, including in the capital, Kyiv.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday that Moscow targeted electricity and oil and gas facilities 76 times in the week since Donald Trump announced a supposed “energy ceasefire”.

On Monday, he said “more than 10 energy infrastructure facilities were damaged, and the lights went out for at least 550,000 families” after attacks overnight. Kyiv says it initially held off responding in kind but has since resumed its own strikes. Last winter, Russian strikes knocked out power and heating in sub-zero temperatures. As the big freeze approaches again, Ukraine is racing to make sufficient repairs to the battered grid in time.

Rolling power cuts are one way of easing pressure, but there is no quick fix. The World Bank said in February that the long-term bill to restore Ukraine’s energy sector is estimated at about \$91 billion. Some \$4.9 billion is needed for urgent repairs this year alone.

With no let-up in attacks, Olena Pavlenko, head of the DiXi Group energy think tank, said that figure could well be an underestimate.

“I am sure that with the level of attacks and destruction, the number just for 2026 will be around \$6-7 billion,” she said.

Kyiv city is served by three combined heat and power (CHP) plants with a total generation capacity of some 1.3 gigawatts, according to Global Energy Monitor, an NGO.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko said this month that the city’s capacity to generate electricity had been “destroyed”, despite repairs since last winter.

“Information about the level of damaged capacity is not publicly available, but we assume that most of the CHPs are fully destroyed again,” said Pavlenko.

“Distributed generation will not be enough to cover the needs. The city team and government still have some time to repair the facilities before the temperature drops.

“But in case of another attack, the situation will repeat.”

Kyiv’s hulking CHPs date back to the 1970s and 1980s during Soviet times, and the stock of replacement parts to patch up damage is running low. Power company DTEK said on October 1 that its thermal power plants have been attacked more than 230 times since the start of the conflict. Vitalii Zaichenko, from grid operator Ukrenergo, said last week that recent ballistic-missile and drone strikes have made energy workers’ jobs “significantly more difficult”. — AFP

The end of abundance

FROM THE early 1980s until the Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2020, the world economy enjoyed unusually good conditions. The Cold War ended, defence budgets shrank, and hundreds of millions of workers joined the global market. Energy and metals were mostly cheap, and supply chains stretched across borders on the assumption that goods would always move freely. Inflation was on a downward trend, owing partly to central banks and partly to the strong tide of peace, globalisation, and plentiful supply they were swimming in.

That tide has turned. The decades ahead will be shaped by a geopolitical contest for energy supplies, industrial metals, rare earths, critical minerals, and semiconductor chips. Water and food may eventually join the list. The competition will be fierce and, at times, violent.

To service their debts and support ageing populations, advanced economies need growth, and the main drivers — from AI to electrification to rearmament — are heavy in materials. Data centres’ electricity consumption will more than double by 2030. Populous developing countries, for their part, need steel, copper, and energy to build infrastructure. But supply responds slowly: a new mine takes well over a decade to develop, and processing is concentrated in just a few countries. When demand is urgent, power matters as much as price in determining outcomes.

A supply-constrained world is prone to stagflation, which, unlike weak demand, lacks a straightforward monetary-policy remedy. Higher interest rates cannot produce a barrel of oil or a ton of copper. They cut demand, but they also raise the cost of investment, which is needed to expand supply. Fiscal policy, if targeted at production and productivity with clear goals and end dates, can be more effective. The risk is that governments instead offer broad subsidies and transfers that augment demand without improving supply.

This shift has a political dimension. For four decades,



A supply-constrained world is prone to stagflation.



V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN

The writer is Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India

Electricity consumption by data centres will more than double by 2030. Populous developing countries, for their part, need steel, copper, and energy to build infrastructure. But supply responds slowly

unelected central bankers set the limits, and governments were expected to respect them. But elected officials want to control the policy levers governing energy security, industrial capacity, and debt costs, and rightly so. In a departure from the past, this may mean monetary policy playing second fiddle to fiscal policy to secure necessary supplies of critical raw materials and resources.

Emerging economies may conclude that a weaker dollar will ease pressure on their currencies and bring back capital. But much depends on local conditions. Resource-rich economies will gain from better terms of trade, although their currencies may strengthen, a problem they are likely to try addressing with financial repression. The populous, fast-growing economies without sufficient energy or mineral deposits will be forced to compete with rich economies for these resources. A weaker dollar helps at the margin, but it does not make oil or copper cheaper.

For many countries, energy policy is now macroeconomic policy, because every unit of energy that they can avoid importing lowers the risk of stagflation. That underscores the need for efficiency, domestic generation from every possible source, diverse suppliers, and strategic reserves.

These governments should provide direct support to poorer households, rather than relying on blanket fuel subsidies, and they should focus fiscal policy on improving and accelerating the

supply of power, water, logistics, minerals (through processing and recycling), and skills. Policymakers must do this while committing to a credible public-debt anchor — fiscal dominance does not have to mean fiscal profligacy — and offering savers inflation-protected instruments that fund domestic investment. Regulation, too, must serve supply. The speed at which a country can approve a mine, power line, or factory is now a competitive advantage.

Above all, these economies should double down on other real resources that may be scarce in the future. Food is one. Countries with large agriculture sectors can raise output per worker, preserve water and soil health, invest in agro-processing, and become reliable suppliers. That is far less capital-intensive than chasing the technological frontier.

Human capital is another. Ageing societies will need workers for jobs that machines cannot easily perform, such as elder care, nursing, counselling, and hospitality. Countries that train young people to recognised standards can negotiate the movement of this skilled population as partners rather than supplicants.

At home, labour-intensive manufacturing and services remain the surest route to job creation at scale. While investing in advanced manufacturing is necessary to build resilience, the goal should not be self-sufficiency at any cost. A better approach is to recognise the need for imported inputs and mitigate the risks of dependence by diversifying suppliers and maintaining buffer stocks. The age of abundance now looks more like an aberration than a new reality. The end of this fortunate interval is narrowing the options of emerging economies and forcing them to act quickly. The governments that understand the stakes early and begin coordinating energy, fiscal, monetary, trade, and skills policy now will fare better than those waiting for abundance to return. It is not coming back.

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(The views expressed in this commentary do not represent the official position of the Government of India)

SPORTS

GLOBALSTAGE



Al Zahraa al Maashari and Lamia al Saadi will officiate at the IHF Trophy for Youth, in Faisalabad, Pakistan, from November 4 to 9.

Omani referees selected for international handball events

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 20

Omani handball referees will take part in two international competitions in Pakistan and Thailand, strengthening the country's presence on the international officiating stage and highlighting the continued development of national refereeing talent.

The International Handball Federation (IHF) has selected continental referees Al Zahraa al Maashari and Lamia al Saadi to officiate at the IHF Trophy for Youth, which will be held in Faisalabad, Pakistan, from November 4 to 9.

The appointment marks another important step in the development of the Omani refereeing duo, providing an opportunity to gain further international experience and officiate matches in a competition featuring teams from different backgrounds and levels of competition.

The tournament will be the pair's second international assignment since receiving their continental refereeing badges in May 2025. Their first overseas appointment was at the IHF Trophy in Bangladesh.

Their latest selection reflects the progress they have made since earning their continental qualifications and the importance of providing Omani referees with opportunities to develop their expertise through participation in international competitions. It also highlights the growing opportunities for Omani women officials to gain experience and establish themselves in the sport's international refereeing community.

Meanwhile, continental referees Mutasim al Dughaiishi and Muntasir al Dughaiishi left Oman on Sunday for Bangkok, Thailand, where they will officiate at the Handball Challenge Trophy from October 19 to November 2.

The duo received their nomination from the IHF, securing an opportunity to contribute to another international competition and further develop their officiating experience.

Their participation will expose them to the technical and professional demands of international matches, where decision-making, concentration and consistent application of the rules are essential. The assignment also provides an opportunity to exchange experience with officials from other countries and strengthen their ability to manage matches at a competitive level.

The appointments of both Omani refereeing teams underline the importance of continued investment in referee development and international exposure. Regular participation in overseas competitions enables officials to refine their skills, gain confidence and maintain the standards required for international handball.

The selections also reflect the efforts of the Oman Handball Association to support national refereeing talent and expand its representation at regional and international events. By facilitating opportunities for both male and female officials, the association continues to contribute to the development of Omani handball officiating and strengthen its presence on the international stage.



Mutasim al Dughaiishi and Muntasir al Dughaiishi are officiating at the Handball Challenge Trophy in Bangkok from October 19 to November 2.

Tactical battles intensify in Musannah on Day 2

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 20

OMAN'S KHALED bin Yahya al Sarihi retained the Optimist lead, while Bahrain's Dawood Abdullah moved to the top of ILCA 7 as competition intensified on the second day of the 15th Musannah Race Week and the 3rd Arab Women's Sailing Championship at Barceló Musannah Resort.

Four additional races were completed across the Optimist, ILCA 4, ILCA 6, ILCA 7 and Para Inclusive Hansa 303 classes, with stronger winds and tight racing testing the sailors ahead of the final day.

In the women's Optimist competition, Egypt's Laila Mohamed won three of the day's four races to strengthen her position at the top of the category, finishing sixth overall. Oman's Abeer bint Khalil al Zakwani remained second among the women, five points behind Mohamed, after one victory and three other strong finishes. Bahrain's Dana Abdullah held third place.

Al Sarihi continued to lead the overall Optimist standings after recording three podium finishes. India's Krishna Venkitachalam moved into second following a race victory, while Oman's Mohammed bin Ziyad al Qasmi was placed third after a win and a runner-up finish.

Egypt's Karma Waleed maintained her ILCA 4 lead by winning the final two races of the day. Oman's Hood bin Saad al Nofli moved into second, ahead of the UAE's Abdulrahman al Bahri. Oman's Tarteel bint Zaid al Hasani finished fourth overall and second in the women's category, while compatriot Hadeel bint Yousef al Mushairfi was ranked third among the women.

STRONG WINDS

Waleed said: "I am happy to maintain my lead and hope to continue performing well in the remaining races. Today's racing was challenging, particularly with the stronger winds and boats competing closely together. This is my second time competing at Musannah Race Week, having previously participated in 2022. The event offers excellent organisation, varied sailing conditions and strong competition."

Tunisia's Ines Nabel Gmati strengthened her position in women's ILCA 6 with two wins and two second-place finishes, extending her overall advantage to one



Oman's Khaled bin Yahya al Sarihi retained the Optimist lead, while Bahrain's Dawood Abdullah moved to the top of ILCA 7 at the 15th Musannah Race Week.



Oman's Abeer bint Khalil al Zakwani was second with Bahrain's Dana Abdullah on third.

point. Egypt's Kholoud Mostafa was ranked second among the women, while Kuwait's Ameena Shah took third. The UAE's Simeon Hristov remained second overall, with Oman's Elyas bin Bader al Fadhali eighth.

In ILCA 7, Bahrain's Abdullah recorded two wins and a second-place finish to overtake Oman's Al Mutasim bin Hamoud al Farsi. The UAE's Hamza bin Ismail al Ali remained third.

Al Ali said he was pleased to return to the top three after a break of nearly 15

months, adding that his experience helped him adapt to the challenging winds. Al Farsi said the conditions demanded high physical fitness and adaptability, and he hoped to improve in the remaining races.

The Para Inclusive Hansa 303 competition saw Buthaina al Balushi and Malik al Qartoobi take the lead with three consecutive victories. Anwer al Balushi and Adil al Siyabi moved into second, followed by Anas al Hashmi and Ahmed al Arami.

Project Manager Hamad al Yahmadi said the championships were providing a platform to develop young talent, expand women's participation in marine sports and strengthen regional cooperation.

Principal Race Officer Marina Psychogiou praised Oman's race management team for its professionalism in coordinating two courses, including one for inclusive sailing and another accommodating approximately 85 boats across four classes. She also highlighted the presence of two women in senior race management and judging roles.

The closing ceremony and prize presentation will be held under the auspices of Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al Hinai, Ambassador-at-Large at the Foreign Ministry, in presence of Arab Sailing Federation President Shaikh Khalifa bin Abdullah al Khalifa, and Oman Sail CEO Dr Khamis bin Salim al Jabri.

Omani sprinters fourth, Awlad Thani fifth in shot put

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 20

Qusai al Rawahi and Taha al Harrasi finished fourth in their respective 100 metres events as Oman's athletes continued their campaign at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games on Tuesday.

Saif al Muqbal was also placed fourth in his 100 metres heat, while Oman's throwers recorded fifth, sixth and seventh-place finishes during a demanding day of competition.

Al Rawahi clocked 12.32 seconds in the men's T13 100 metres, while Al Harrasi completed the T36 race in 12.80 seconds. Al Muqbal recorded 11.59 seconds to finish fourth in his men's T46 qualifying heat.

In the field events, Muhanna Awlad Thani was placed fifth in the men's F33 shot put with a best effort of 7.74 metres.

Fawzi al Hubaishi finished sixth in the F54 javelin with a



Qusai al Rawahi and Taha al Harrasi finished fourth in their 100 metres events.

throw of 18.56 metres, while Mutasim al Saadi took seventh in the F53 category with 17.70 metres.

The results leave Oman looking to the remaining programme for further opportunities, with Al Hubaishi already assured of an appearance in Thursday's men's F54/55 shot put final.

The Games, which bring together athletes from 45 National Paralympic Committees, continue until October 24.

Wednesday's programme

offers another busy day for the Omani delegation. Al Rawahi returns for the T13 long jump final, while Rawan al Hasani contests the women's wheelchair 100 metres.

Iman al Shamsi will compete in the women's F34 shot put, and Al Saadi will switch from javelin to the men's F53 shot put. Mohammed al Qasmi and Mohammed al Mashaykhi will also begin their shot put campaigns in the F32 category.

Their appearances give

Oman further opportunities across both track and field as the squad seeks to build on its opening performances. Handcyclist Sami al Sulaimi begins his campaign on Wednesday in the individual time trial before returning for the men's H4-5 road race on Thursday, October 22.

His preparation included specialist training on climbs and descents, alongside work on endurance and physical conditioning to meet the demands of international road competition.

Oman's participation follows a preparation programme organised by the Oman Paralympic Committee in coordination with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth through its promising athletes programme. The athletics squad trained in Poland and Thailand, supported by domestic sessions at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

SEASON ONE



The tournament saw a standout run from young Karthick CS, who won the Under 13, Under 15 and Under 17 boys' singles titles.

FALCON CLINCH FALCON SUR CUP BADMINTON

MUSCAT: Falcon for Badminton Excellence wrapped up the first season of the Falcon Sur Cup on October 16, after two days of competition at Falcon Badminton Academy, Senaya, Sur. Played under the theme 'Learn to play, train to win', the tournament brought together kids, men and women in singles and doubles events.

The crowd saw close finals, comebacks and a standout run from young Karthick CS, who won the Under 13, Under 15 and Under 17 boys' singles titles. His U17 final against Mighael Stephenraj was decided 21-18.

The tournament aimed to promote badminton in Sur and across Oman, encourage youth and women to take part, and help spot emerging talent. Organisers said the strong turnout and the standard of play showed the growing badminton community in the region.

Falcon for Badminton Excellence thanked all of its sponsors, whose support made the tournament possible, along with every player, parent, volunteer and spectator.

SEASON 1 CHAMPIONS
Under 11 Boys: Aiden Naduthodi; Under 11 Girls: Meena Sridar; Under 13 Boys: Karthick CS; Under 15 Boys: Karthick CS; Under 15 Girls: Killada Lavanthika; Under 17 Boys: Karthick CS
Doubles: Men's Doubles B: Srinivas & Sandeep beat Jasin & Binu 13-21, 21-17, 21-16; Men's Doubles D: Ajmal & Nishad beat Suraj & Monir 21-18, 21-19; Mixed Doubles B: Pranav Sajeev & Amrita Menon beat Revathi & Jasin 21-12, 21-14; Women's Doubles: Siva Sundari & Resmi Suresh beat Revathi & Ramya 21-2, 21-3.

SKIPPER BAVUMA HITS 179 TO LEAD SA FIGHTBACK



GQEBERHA, South Africa: Temba Bavuma hit a career-best 179 to lead a dramatic South African fightback on the third day of the second Test against Australia at St George's Park on Tuesday.

The South African captain shared century partnerships with Marco Jansen (85) and Simon Harmer (82) as the hosts posted 425 for nine declared — a total which seemed improbable after they were 97 for five overnight.

It was Bavuma's third day at the crease after battling through bowler-friendly conditions on the first two rain-shortened days.

The situation looked dire for the world Test champions when the sixth wicket fell on 110 early in the day but the tall Jansen changed the tempo of the game as he hammered nine fours and three sixes off 100 deliveries.

Jansen dominated a seventh wicket partnership of 132 off 186 balls but Bavuma became more assertive when he was joined by Harmer after Jansen clipped Scott Boland to midwicket in the first over with the second new ball. Bavuma and Harmer added a South African Test record 182 for the eighth wicket.

Harmer and Bavuma fell off successive balls before Bavuma declared to leave Australia with a short period to bat before the close. — AFP



Qurayat and Masirah secured victories in the second round of the second stage of the Women's Futsal League.

Qurayat, Masirah claim wins in women's futsal

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 20

QURAYAT AND Masirah secured victories in the second round of the second stage of the 2026-27 Women's Futsal League, with the two matches producing a combined 14 goals.

Qurayat marked their first appearance in the decisive phase with a 4-1 victory over Al Bashayer, while Masirah bounced back from their opening defeat by recording an emphatic 8-1 win over Al Shabab.

Qurayat entered the second stage after sitting out the opening round and made an immediate impact by collecting all three points against an Al Bashayer side that had begun its campaign strongly.

Al Bashayer went into the match after scoring nine goals against Al Shabab in the opening round, but Qurayat halted their momentum with a composed performance to make a positive



start to their title challenge.

The result moved Qurayat into the group of four clubs currently level on three points, while Al Bashayer suffered their first defeat of the second stage. With the five qualifiers competing in a single group, every point gained against a direct rival could prove important in determining the final standings.

MASIRAH SINK AL SHABAB
In the second match, Masirah responded strongly to their

opening-round loss against Al Amerat by overcoming Al Shabab 8-1.

The victory gave Masirah their first three points of the second stage and restored their confidence after a difficult start. Their attacking display also strengthened their position in what is developing into a closely contested race.

Al Shabab, meanwhile, remain without a point after two matches. They have conceded 17 goals and scored only once, leaving the team with work to do

defensively ahead of the coming rounds.

Following the second round, Qurayat, Masirah, Al Amerat and Al Bashayer are all level on three points.

Qurayat and Al Amerat have each played one match, while Masirah and Al Bashayer have completed two fixtures. Al Amerat had a rest day in the latest round.

The congested points table leaves the title race open, with the coming matches expected to provide a clearer picture of the leading contenders. Official positions will also depend on the competition's tie-breaking criteria should teams finish level on points.

The second stage is being played in a double round-robin format, with each of the five clubs facing the others twice. The team finishing with the highest points tally will be crowned league champions.

While four clubs will look to build on their early victories, Al Shabab will aim to secure their first positive result and improve their position as the competition progresses.

Oman teams reach Military beach volleyball last 8

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 20

Oman A and Oman B secured places in the men's quarterfinals of the World Military Beach Volleyball Championship 'Muscat 2026' as the group stage concluded at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

Both Omani teams strengthened their qualification bids with important victories during the third day, which featured eight matches across the men's and women's competitions.

Oman A recorded their first win of the tournament with a straight-set victory over Sri Lanka. The result provided a timely lift after two narrow 2-1 defeats against Brazil and



Algeria and secured the team third place in their group.

Oman also advanced after adding a second victory to their campaign. They defeated the Netherlands 2-0, building on their comeback win against France a day earlier. The Omani

side later lost 2-0 to Qatar in their second match of the day but still finished third in Group A.

Qatar topped Group A after completing an impressive unbeaten campaign, while Germany finished second following straight-set victories over France and the Netherlands. Oman B took third place, with France claiming the fourth and final qualifying position as the Netherlands exited the tournament.

BRAZIL LEAD GROUP B
Brazil led Group B after maintaining their strong form with a 2-0 win over Algeria. Algeria finished second, followed by Oman A in third and Sri Lanka in fourth.

The quarterfinal line-up therefore includes Qatar, Germany, Oman B, France, Brazil, Algeria, Oman A and Sri Lanka.

The third day also decided the four semifinalists in the women's competition. Germany defeated Algeria 2-0, while Sri Lanka secured a straight-set victory over the Netherlands.

Germany, Algeria, France and Sri Lanka progressed to the last four, while Oman and the Netherlands were eliminated following the opening stage.

The championship, which began on October 15, continues until October 22, with both Omani men's teams now aiming to extend their campaigns and challenge for places in the medal rounds.

SPORTS

MINIMUMPENALTY



Cristiano Ronaldo

RONALDO HANDED 30-DAY SUSPENSION AFTER WALKING OUT ON PORTUGAL

LISBON: Cristiano Ronaldo has been handed a 30-day suspension for leaving the Portuguese national team camp, the country’s football federation (FPF) announced on Monday.

The 41-year-old abruptly left the Portugal camp on September 30 during the Uefa Nations League, before accusing coach Jorge Jesus of breaking his word about giving him game time.

Ronaldo apologised to supporters earlier in October, adding he would accept any punishment that was imposed.

The former Manchester United and Real Madrid star, who will also have to pay a fine of 255 euros (\$286), has received the minimum penalty provided for in the federation’s regulations, which stipulate suspensions of between one and six months for leaving the national team.

Ronaldo left Portugal’s squad after first being made to warm up as a substitute against Norway on September 27 and not being brought on, and then finding out he would not start against Denmark in the match on October 1.

Ronaldo’s suspension takes effect from the day of the Denmark match, meaning he has already served 19 days of his ban and will complete it by the end of October.

The FPF disciplinary committee said it took into account “the remorse shown in the statement” issued by Ronaldo on October 6, in which he admitted his mistake and expressed his willingness to accept a punishment.

The five-time Ballon d’Or winner is Portugal’s all-time top goalscorer and record appearance-maker in men’s international football.

But in his absence, Portugal won all four of their Nations League matches and qualified for the quarter-finals with two games to spare.

Portugal host Denmark on November 14 and then travel to face Wales on November 17 in their final two Nations League Group A4 matches — by which time Ronaldo will have served his suspension.

‘PUTTING IN THE WORK’

In a social media post shortly after his walk-out, Ronaldo accused Portugal boss Jesus of breaking his word about giving him game time in Nations League matches but insisted he was not retiring from international duty.

“I will be available, as I have always been until today, to compete and win for our national team,” Ronaldo posted.

He said Jesus had gone back on his word about bringing him on against Norway, and then in a press conference before the Denmark match had not said a series of points they had agreed upon during a conversation beforehand.

One of Ronaldo’s pre-approved talking points was that Jesus had “made a mistake in asking someone of the stature of Pele or Maradona to warm up and then not sending him on in the match”.

Jesus, speaking several days later, said he would select Ronaldo for international duty if the forward was playing for his club Al Nassr, and was interested in being called up.

Following the FPF’s announcement, Ronaldo did not directly react to the news on Instagram but did post a picture of himself preparing to train with his Saudi club, accompanied with the caption, “Putting in the work”. — AFP

Al Shabab, Al Nahda hit five as JL fifth round ends



Al Nahda outperformed Sur in Jindal League Round 5 match.



Al Shabab thrashed Sohar 5-0 at the Sohar Sports Complex.

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 20

AL SHABAB

AND Al Nahda delivered the biggest victories of the fifth round of the 2026-27 Jindal League, both scoring five goals against Sohar and Sur respectively, as the round concluded with 24 goals across seven matches.

Al Shabab secured a commanding 5-0 away victory over Sohar, while Al Nahda defeated Sur 5-1 to move into second place in the standings. The results left Al Nasr leading the competition with a perfect 12 points from four matches, followed by Al Nahda on 10 points, with Al Shabab and Saham level on nine.

At Sohar Sports Complex, Al Shabab took control almost immediately when Khalid al Buraiki headed home a corner delivered by Hussein al Shahri in the opening minute.

The visitors maintained their attacking momentum, although Sohar created opportunities through Saud al Muqbali and Diop. Goalkeeper Majdi Shaaban, facing his former club, kept the hosts from finding an

equaliser before the interval.

Sohar’s hopes of a comeback suffered a major setback in the 67th minute when Sami al Anabi was sent off following a VAR review for a challenge on Hussein al Shahri.

Al Shabab capitalised on their numerical advantage five minutes later as substitute Bebejin Willem headed in Al Shahri’s cross to double the lead.

The visitors then produced a remarkable finish, scoring three times deep into stoppage time. Juma al Habsi added the third in the 96th minute, Abdulrahman al Yaqoubi struck from outside the penalty area in the 99th, and Hussein Al Shahri completed the scoring with a late breakaway goal.

The defeat was Sohar’s second successive heavy loss, following their 4-1 setback against Al Musannah in the previous round.

AL NAHDA THRASH SUR

Meanwhile, Al Nahda recorded an emphatic 5-1 victory over Sur, with Karim Darwish scoring twice alongside goals from Mohammed Faraj, Jameel al Yahmadi and Djefana Ndorsen.

Abdullah al Mushaifri scored Sur’s consolation goal from the penalty spot, but

the hosts were unable to prevent their fifth consecutive defeat.

The result took Al Nahda to 10 points, strengthening their position immediately behind leaders Al Nasr, while Sur remained bottom without a point after five matches.

AL MUGHANNI HITS HAT-TRICK

The fifth round also produced an impressive individual performance from Dhofar’s Abdullah bin Zahir al Mughanni, who scored a hat-trick in his side’s 3-2 victory over Ibri. Fanja’s Milhem al Hadhrami matched that achievement with three goals in a 3-1 win against Saham. Across the seven fixtures, six ended in victories and one in a draw, with an average of 3.43 goals per match. The round also produced 27 yellow cards, two red cards and two penalty goals.

Al Shabab’s five-goal victory was the widest winning margin of the round, while Al Nahda’s match against Sur produced the highest combined goal tally.

Attention now turns to the sixth round, which begins on Friday, October 23, with clubs looking to build on their recent results as the early-season battle for positions continues.

China defeat Oman in U17 Gulf Cup opener

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 20

Oman’s national under-17 football team opened their Gulf Cup U17 Qatar 2026 campaign with a 2-1 defeat to China at Hamad bin Khalifa Stadium on Monday evening, despite a strong second-half response and a late goal from Abdulrahman al Hashmi.

China took a two-goal lead before the break, while Oman reduced the deficit in the 90th minute but could not find an equaliser during stoppage time.

The result left China on top of Group A with six points, while Bahrain and the UAE have three points each. Oman and hosts Qatar remain without a point. Bahrain also recorded a 1-0 victory over Qatar in the other Group A fixture.

Oman will return to action on Thursday when they face the UAE at Grand Hamad Stadium in what has become an important match for their



Oman and China players in action during the U17 Gulf Cup in Doha.

hopes of progressing from the group. China will meet Bahrain on the same day at Saoud bin Abdulrahman Stadium.

The opening stages against China were evenly contested, with both sides attempting to settle into possession before the first clear chance arrived in the 13th minute. Yang Chenxu connected with a delivery from the left and struck a powerful effort, but Oman goalkeeper Abdullah al Zaabi reacted well to keep it out.

Oman gradually began to create opportunities of their own. Abdulrahman al Hashmi tested the Chinese goalkeeper in the 22nd minute before captain Bashar al Shamsi came close 10 minutes later after breaking through the defence. His initial attempt was saved, and his follow-up lob narrowly missed the target.

Al Zaabi was again called into action in the 38th minute after a defensive error allowed China a clear sight of goal, while Abdulrahim al Tuwairshi responded moments later with a powerful left-footed strike that was kept out. China finally broke the deadlock in the 41st minute when Liu Kai converted from the penalty spot. Oman then suffered another setback deep into first-half stoppage time, with Peng Xianchen heading home China’s second to send Oman into the interval trailing 2-0.

Oman returned with greater attacking intent after the break. Al Hashmi headed wide in the

55th minute, while Al Tuwairshi fired over shortly afterwards as Ahmed bin Salem Bait Said’s side increased the pressure.

The match shifted further in Oman’s favour in the 63rd minute when China were reduced to 10 men following a straight red card to Liu Kaiwan. Oman pushed forward in search of a way back, with Al Hashmi and Nader al Noobi among those threatening the Chinese goal. Their pressure was finally rewarded in the 90th minute when Saif al Jabri’s free-kick struck the defensive wall and fell to Al Hashmi, who converted to make it 2-1.

Oman continued to press during stoppage time and came close to snatching an equaliser, but China held on to secure the three points.

The tournament features 10 teams divided into two groups. Oman are in Group A alongside Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain and China, while Group B comprises Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Yemen and Egypt.



MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE
7,554.292

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$110.18
BRENT \$111.75
LIGHT \$109.08



SHORTTAKES



The project will be developed in phases and incorporate hospitality, leisure and residential facilities within an agricultural setting.

OMAN SIGNS DEAL FOR MALAKAI PROJECT IN BARKA

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 20

Oman’s Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has signed an agreement with Al Mursal Trading and Investment LLC to develop an integrated tourism complex in Barka, combining a luxury resort and freehold villas on an approximately 800,000-square-metre site.

The Malakai project, in Al Batinah South Governorate, will be developed in phases and incorporate hospitality, leisure and residential facilities within an agricultural setting.

The agreement was signed by Sayyid Ibrahim bin Said al Busaidi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism; and Kirvi Pankaj Khimji, representing Al Mursal Trading and Investment.

The planned resort will comprise 51 accommodation units, ranging from individual rooms to three-bedroom suites, alongside a gym, spa facilities and outdoor lounges. The development will also include 51 residential villas available for freehold ownership.

Its design draws on traditional Omani walled gardens and the agricultural landscape of the coastal plains, incorporating palm groves and water features. The development is intended to preserve the site’s geographical and cultural character while offering accommodation focused on privacy and personalised services.

The ministry said the project would support efforts to attract foreign investment and expand Oman’s luxury and wellness tourism offering.

It is also expected to create direct and indirect jobs, generate business for local suppliers and increase tourism’s contribution to gross domestic product, supporting the economic diversification objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Oman targets British investment, expertise

OMAN promoted opportunities in its capital market, industrial zones and priority economic sectors at a GCC-UK investment dialogue in London, as officials sought British partnerships to support economic diversification.

Representatives of Invest Oman, the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) and the Special Economic Zone at Duqm joined the event, organised by The Business Year under the auspices of the GCC General Secretariat.

The dialogue brought together about 350 government officials, investors, financial institution executives and corporate leaders to discuss cooperation in trade, energy, technology, financial services and infrastructure.

Haitham bin Salim al Salmi, Chief Executive Officer of MSX, said closer cooperation between Gulf and British capital markets could help broaden the investor base and increase international investment flows.

He said the exchange was seeking partnerships with global financial and investment institutions to improve international investors’ access to the Omani market.

Exchanging expertise with overseas markets could support the development of financial infrastructure, improve liquidity and deepen the market, he said.

Stronger links with international institutions would also help bring Omani investment opportunities to a wider range of investors.

The exchange’s participation formed part of broader efforts to connect capital market development with investment promotion, expand financing options for companies and support private sector growth.

A panel on finance, capital markets and investment examined developments across Gulf exchanges, opportunities for dual listings and ways to attract international investors. Discussions also covered measures to facilitate the



Nasser bin Khalifa al Kindi, Chief Executive Officer of Invest Oman, outlined opportunities in manufacturing, logistics, renewable energy, technology, tourism and food security.

participation of global financial institutions in regional markets.

Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, Chief Executive Officer of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, said the zone was seeking British industrial and technological expertise to support its development in advanced manufacturing, logistics and clean energy.

Al Duqm’s location on the Arabian Sea, infrastructure and existing major projects provided a platform for further investment, he said.

The zone was focused on increasing the benefits of investments already made while attracting complementary projects that could expand domestic industrial capacity, transfer knowledge and develop value chains.

Akaak said the United Kingdom was a key economic partner for Oman, with scope for longer-term cooperation in industry, energy, technology and logistics.

He added that the value of such dialogues lay in converting shared economic interests into practical partnerships and investment projects that contributed to the national economy.

Nasser bin Khalifa al Kindi, Chief Executive Officer of Invest Oman, outlined opportunities in manufacturing, logistics, renewable energy, technology, tourism and food security.

He said Oman’s investment advantages included its geographical location, infrastructure, ports, economic and free zones, and industrial estates.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion was working to improve the investment environment by simplifying procedures, expanding digital services and strengthening the efficiency of the legislative and regulatory framework, he said.

Al Kindi described Invest Oman as a unified gateway for promoting opportunities and providing investor services. Its approach included developing projects suited to target markets and coordinating with public and private sector organisations to accelerate investment procedures.

Engagement with British companies, financial institutions and investment firms was intended to translate investor interest into projects that supported domestic production, technology transfer and employment for Omanis, he said.

The Omani delegation’s participation included panel discussions and direct meetings with investors and corporate executives, supporting efforts to build longer-term investment partnerships under Oman Vision 2040. — ONA


The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion was working to improve the investment environment by simplifying procedures, expanding digital services and strengthening the efficiency of the legislative and regulatory framework.

NASSER BIN KHALIFA AL KINDI
CEO, Invest Oman

IDOM wins design contract for Oman’s 500 MW Al Kamil Solar I project

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 20

Spanish engineering consultancy IDOM has been selected by China’s Shanxi Installation Group to undertake detailed engineering design for the 500 MW Al Kamil Solar I Independent Power Project (IPP), a major renewable energy development planned in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate.

Announcing the award on October 19, IDOM said its scope encompasses detailed engineering services for the utility-scale photovoltaic facility, alongside the definition of initial site studies essential to the project’s successful implementation.

The contract represents a further expansion of IDOM’s renewable energy portfolio in the Middle East and strengthens its involvement in Oman’s accelerating transition towards cleaner electricity generation.



IDOM will work closely with Shanxi Installation Group, which secured the EPC contract for the project in July 2026.

IDOM’s multidisciplinary engineering team will work closely with Shanxi Installation Group, which secured the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract for the project in July 2026, to support the development of an efficient, reliable and high-performance solar power facility.

The Al Kamil Solar I project is being developed by a consortium

comprising France-based EDF Power Solutions, Oman National Engineering & Investment Company (ONEIC) and OQ Alternative Energy (OQAE), the renewable energy arm of OQ Group.

Located in the Al Kamil W’al Wafi area of Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, the project will supply electricity to Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (Nama PWP) under a long-term power purchase agreement.

Agreements underpinning the development were signed in June 2026 during His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq’s state visit to France, underscoring the growing importance of international partnerships in Oman’s clean energy ambitions.

Estimated to cost approximately RO 100 million (\$260 million), the solar facility will occupy around 4.7 million square metres. The EDF-led consortium will finance,

build, own, operate and maintain the project.

Under its EPC contract, Shanxi Installation Group is responsible for engineering, procurement, equipment supply, construction, installation, grid connection, testing and commissioning, together with two-and-a-half years of operation and maintenance following completion.

Headquartered in Spain, IDOM is an international engineering, architecture and consulting group with extensive experience across renewable energy, infrastructure and industrial development.

Its clean energy capabilities span utility-scale solar and wind projects, green hydrogen, energy storage, hydropower, electricity transmission and industrial decarbonisation. The consultancy also provides feasibility assessments, technical advisory and owner’s engineering services for complex energy developments.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



The initiative reaffirms National Finance’s commitment to advancing women’s leadership and professional development.

National Finance launches Irtiqaa to advance women’s leadership

MUSCAT: Demonstrating a strong commitment to nurturing leadership talent and building a strong, future-ready management pipeline, National Finance, the Sultanate of Oman’s leading finance and leasing company, has announced the launch of ‘Irtiqaa’, a dedicated Women’s Leadership Development Programme designed to strengthen leadership capabilities and enhance professional competencies.

The launch coincides with Omani Women’s Day, reaffirming National Finance’s commitment to advancing women’s leadership and professional development.

The initiative further underscores National Finance’s focus on fostering an inclusive, high-performing workplace where talent is nurtured, potential is unlocked and career progression is supported through intensive learning programmes and continuous development.

The Irtiqaa Women’s Leadership Development Programme is designed to strengthen women employees’ leadership competencies, enhance decision-making and equip them to navigate evolving business demands and complex workplace dynamics.

The inaugural cohort will comprise 15 women from supervisory, specialist, managerial and equivalent professional roles, who will undertake a structured, intensive learning journey aimed at honing their individual strengths, broadening their leadership perspectives and preparing them to assume greater responsibilities and contribute meaningfully to National Finance’s continued growth.

Irtiqaa comprises six integrated modules designed to strengthen individual effectiveness, leadership aptitude and organisational impact.

‘Self-Leadership & Emotional Mastery’ focuses on building self-awareness, emotional intelligence and personal efficiency, while ‘Managing Time, Energy & Flow’ enhances prioritisation, focus, resilience and sustainable performance.

‘Assertiveness & Conflict Resolution’ equips participants to navigate difficult conversations and deliver constructive feedback, while ‘Optimising Diverse Teams’ fosters inclusive collaboration and harnesses diverse perspectives.

‘Overcoming Bias & Ethical Leadership’ strengthens the ability to recognise bias, exercise sound judgement and uphold principled decision-making, while ‘Leading with Influence’ develops executive presence, strategic confidence and leadership impact.

iCAUR Oman launches new winter campaign

ICAUR Oman has announced the launch of its exciting winter campaign “Unlock Winter. Unlock Your Lifestyle” offering customers a comprehensive ownership package on the iCAUR V27 and iCAUR 03T.

Running till December 31, 2026 the campaign brings together free registration, free insurance, a complimentary service package, a free home charger and free roadside assistance, alongside a raffle that gives customers the chance to win their car back.

Customers who purchase an iCAUR during the campaign period will enjoy free registration on all models and free insurance along with a complimentary service package for 2 years or 30,000 km, whichever comes first. The package also includes a free home charger to support convenient charging at home and free 3-year AAA roadside assistance for added peace of mind on every journey.

Every iCAUR vehicle is further backed by a 6-year/200,000 km manufacturer warranty from the date of delivery with eligible models carrying a power battery warranty of 8 years/200,000 km, whichever comes first.

In addition, every customer who purchases an iCAUR V27, iCAUR 03T or the brand new iCAUR Super V23 during the campaign will be entered into the “Buy an iCAUR This Winter, Win Your Car Back*” raffle with the prize of winning the cost of your car back (*T&Cs apply).

The campaign arrives as the upcoming cooler months bring peak season for outdoor travel across the Sultanate of Oman.

iCAUR’s winter offers are intended to make ownership simpler and more rewarding for new customers, while showcasing two models built for Oman’s mix of city driving, mountain roads and desert terrain. The iCAUR V27 REEV, the brand’s



The campaign offers customers a comprehensive ownership package on the iCAUR V27 and iCAUR 03T.

first mid-to-large SUV combines retro-inspired design with advanced technology.

It is powered by Range Extended Electric Vehicle (REEV) technology in which the combustion engine acts solely as an onboard generator to charge the electric motors, delivering a total range of over 1,000 kilometres.

The V27 produces 449 HP and accelerates from 0 to 100 km/h in 5.9 seconds. Its Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) technology turns the vehicle into a mobile power source for outdoor cooking, camp lighting and device charging, making it well suited to winter picnics, beach trips and desert camping.

Inside, the premium cabin features an incredible 48 dedicated storage compartments alongside a class-leading 715L boot. The iCAUR 03T is an off-road SUV

designed for drivers who seek adventure. It combines a 429-horsepower engine with i-AWD intelligent four-wheel drive accelerating from 0 to 100 km/h in just 4.8 seconds.

Perfectly striking a balance between daily urban utility and trend-setting aesthetics, the 03T eliminates the boundaries of classic electric vehicles through its advanced Range Extended Electric Vehicle (REEV) technology. By utilizing a high-efficiency onboard engine purely as a generator to feed the electric motors, it achieves a total driving range of over 750 km.

Recently unveiled in Oman for the first time in the Middle East, the iCAUR V23 Super is a bold, all-electric SUV that combine distinctive design, modern technology and everyday practicality.

NBO celebrates Omani Women’s Day

MUSCAT: To recognise the achievements of Omani women and celebrate the valuable contributions of its female employees, the National Bank of Oman (NBO) organised a special event to mark Omani Women’s Day. The event was officially inaugurated by Amal Suhail Bahwan al Mukhaini, Chairperson of NBO, highlighting the Bank’s continued commitment to recognising the achievements and contributions of Omani women.

The celebration brought female colleagues together for a day of engagement and connection, reflecting NBO’s commitment to fostering



The event was officially inaugurated by Amal Suhail Bahwan al Mukhaini.

an inclusive and supportive workplace where women are encouraged to grow, develop and succeed.

As part of the celebration, NBO hosted a marketplace featuring female-led Omani SMEs, offering local women

entrepreneurs a platform to showcase their businesses, products and creativity.

The initiative further reinforced the Bank’s support for women entrepreneurs and their growing contributions to Oman’s business community.

Alongside the marketplace, employees participated in two interactive activities designed to encourage creativity, strengthen connections and bring colleagues together in a lively and engaging atmosphere.

The celebration forms part of NBO’s broader efforts to foster an inclusive workplace, empower Omani talent and support the growth of local businesses.

Through initiatives that bring employees and the wider community together, the Bank continues to recognise the contributions of individuals who play an important role in Oman’s development and future prosperity.

Amouage unveils its re-imagined Luxury Body Line

At the Omani High Perfumery House of Amouage, there is an innate understanding that the ritual of scent can take many forms. The most universal of these is centred around Eaux de Parfum that are sprayed onto skin or fabric.

However, in recent years, increasing attention has been considered in forms such as the Body Lotion and the Bath & Shower Gel, each offering a markedly different sensory experience.

Now, in recognition of the increased appreciation of these latter forms, Amouage has completely reconstituted many of its body line products, unveiling a new collection encompassing some of its most beloved compositions: Guidance, Decision, Purpose, Love Delight, Honour Woman and Reflection Man, all featuring



Amouage has completely reconstituted many of its body line products, unveiling a new collection encompassing some of its most beloved compositions.

Frankincense as a key ingredient.

“The decision to revisit our body line provided us with a stimulating and demanding creative opportunity. It was a chance not just to emphasise different facets of some of our perfumes, but also to throw ourselves fully into the challenge of constructing products that would both scent the wearer and fulfil the function of their form in the best way possible”, says Chief Creative Officer, Renaud Salmon.

A Tailored Approach
Salmon determined that the only way to achieve this two-pronged goal was to ensure that each formula was carefully tailored to its specific fragrance concentrate, allowing every product type to remain a true exemplar of its respective form. With regards to their features, he decided that all the products had

to be of superlative quality. To complicate the challenge further, Salmon insisted that each of the different formulae should feature a significant proportion of Omani Frankincense oil, to link it to the heritage of Amouage’s home.

“Omani Frankincense is renowned for its healing properties, so its inclusion served to make the body line even more effective”.

The result of these efforts is a collection of no fewer than 19 new products, each faithful to the creativity of the perfumes while bringing out unexpected aspects of its personality — different textures to enjoy familiar treasures in an entirely novel way.

“A Hand Cream has to be made in such a way as to enable a uniquely personal scenting ritual”, says Salmon.

SHORTTAKES



The benchmark increased from \$106.83 on Monday.

OMAN CRUDE TOPS \$110.18 PER BARREL

MUSCAT: Oman crude rose \$3.35 to \$110.18 a barrel for December delivery on Tuesday, as international oil prices climbed on concerns over attacks on energy infrastructure and shipping in the Gulf region. The Oman benchmark increased from \$106.83 on Monday.

The monthly average price of Oman crude for October delivery was \$87.84 a barrel, up \$11.48 from the September delivery average.

Internationally, Brent crude futures reached \$111.75 a barrel, their highest since May, before easing to \$111.20 by 11:20 GMT, up \$1.65, or 1.5%.

The November US West Texas Intermediate contract, which expires on Tuesday, rose as high as \$110 a barrel, the highest for a nearby contract since April. It was last trading at \$109.08, up \$5.42, or 5.2%.

The gains followed claims by Yemen's Iran-aligned Ansar Allah that they had attacked Saudi energy, airport and military targets on Monday, including an Aramco site in Yanbu, the Shaybah oilfield, Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport and Abha airport.

ING analysts said prices reflected a substantial geopolitical risk premium amidst uncertainty over regional security.

They said that premium could gradually diminish if oil flows continued without disruption, although there were no signs of that happening yet.

Ship-tracking firm Kpler said in a note on Monday that at least 18 vessels had reportedly been attacked over two weeks, sustaining concerns over shipping risks.

Separately, an Ansar Allah attack on a training camp for government security forces in Yemen's Shabwa province killed 58 people and injured more than 200 on Monday. — Agencies

Al Duqm awards **₹**13.8m internal roads contract

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 20

THE Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has awarded a RO 13.8 million contract for an internal road network in Al Duqm, expanding infrastructure to support the zone's urban and industrial growth.

The project is intended to improve access within the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), facilitate the movement of people and goods, and strengthen services as development expands.

Salim bin Said Qatan, Director of the Support Services Department at the zone, said the road network would address infrastructure requirements arising from the zone's growth and improve the quality of life in the areas covered.

Road connectivity is central to the development of economic zones, linking residential, commercial and industrial



The project is intended to improve access within the SEZAD.

areas and providing access to investment plots.

Better connections can help companies move raw materials and finished products more efficiently, while supporting the establishment of new businesses and the expansion of existing operations.

Earlier this year, OPAZ issued a tender for a 30.8-kilometre road network serving seven development areas, including residential neighbourhoods and a light and medium industries zone. The planned works included LED street lighting, channels and culverts for rainwater and surface drainage, and traffic safety measures.

The road programme forms part of efforts to coordinate infrastructure provision with Al Duqm's industrial, commercial and logistics expansion. Access roads and associated services support the use of investment land and connections between

business sites.

Construction and subsequent maintenance can also generate opportunities for Omani companies and small and medium-sized enterprises supplying transport, contracting and support services.

The Al Duqm investment comes amidst a wider national road-building programme.

According to figures published by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, road projects under implementation by the ministry were valued at approximately RO 1.2 billion.

Those projects support connections between governorates, ports and production centres, strengthening the transport network serving trade and logistics.

In Al Duqm, the expansion of internal roads is intended to improve the zone's capacity to accommodate investment and support a broader range of economic activity under Oman Vision 2040. — ONA

Dhank signs **₹**200,000 development deals

DHANK: Five development agreements worth approximately RO 200,000 were signed with the private sector in Dhank on Tuesday to support education, healthcare, social development, sports and religious services.

The agreements will fund projects and community initiatives in the wilayat in Al Dhahirah Governorate, strengthening cooperation between private businesses, government bodies and community organisations.

The signing ceremony was held under the auspices of Tahir bin Mabkhout al Junaibi, Governor of Al Dhahirah, in the presence of



The initiatives cover awqaf and religious affairs.

Shaikh Musallam bin Ahmed al Maashani, Wali of Dhank and representatives of government and community entities.

The initiatives also cover endowments, or awqaf, and religious affairs, forming part of efforts to improve local services and residents' quality of life.

The five development agreements support broader efforts to encourage private sector participation in community development across the Sultanate of Oman and advance the social development objectives of Oman Vision 2040. — ONA

Veolia wins Al Asilah desalination contract

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 20

Veolia's Bahwan Veolia Water has secured a five-year contract to operate and maintain Oman's Al Asilah desalination plant, adding an 80,000-cubic-metre-a-day facility to its operations in the country.

The contract was awarded by Al Asilah Operation and Maintenance LLC and covers the desalination plant and its on-site solar photovoltaic farm.

Bahwan Veolia Water is a partnership between Veolia and Bahwan Engineering Company. Al Asilah becomes the fourth desalination facility operated by Veolia in Oman, alongside plants in Sur, Barka IV and Salalah.

Veolia said Al Asilah and its existing Sur plant would together produce drinking water for approximately 600,000 people across Al Sharqiyah South Governorate.



Veolia, which has operated in Oman's water sector for nearly 20 years, said the contract would also support Omanisation through training and professional development.

The proximity of the facilities would allow them to share technical resources and operational expertise, supporting efficiency and reliability, the company said.

The plant is owned by Al Asilah Desalination Company, whose major shareholders include Japan's JGC

Holdings Corporation and Oman's Bahwan Group.

Philippe Bourdeaux, Veolia's Executive Senior Vice-President for Africa, Near and Middle East, said the contract would strengthen the group's partnership with Oman and support its target to double the desalination capacity it operates worldwide by 2030.

"Desalination is a cornerstone of water security in the Middle East", he said.

Veolia said combining the management of water production and the solar installation would help improve operational performance and support lower-carbon drinking water production.

Bahwan Engineering Company said the partnership combined international expertise with local capabilities to maintain essential water infrastructure.

It said Bahwan Veolia Water would focus on safety, efficiency

and reliability while developing its operations and maintenance expertise, with a view to expanding its services across Oman's water sector.

Sunao Horii, General Manager of Al Asilah Operation and Maintenance, said the award followed an extensive period of discussions and negotiations.

"Today, however, is not the end of that journey. It marks the beginning of a new chapter and the start of our journey together", he said.

Veolia, which has operated in Oman's water sector for nearly 20 years, said the contract would also support Omanisation through training and professional development.

Local teams would draw on the group's domestic, regional and international expertise to strengthen Omani capabilities in the operation of strategic water infrastructure, it said.

PAYMENT COMPETITION

UK targets Apple contactless payment grip

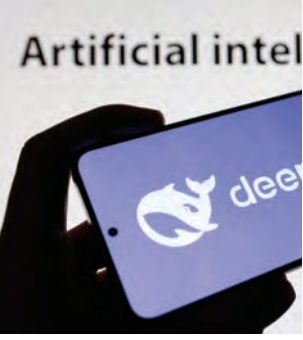


Britain's Competition and Markets Authority proposed lowering access fees and removing technical restrictions on Apple's contactless technology to foster fintech competition.

The regulator aims to allow digital banks and alternative payment apps easier market access. Digital wallets handle 39% of UK payments, with Apple Pay representing the most popular platform nationwide. — Reuters

DATA SECURITY

US orders removal of DeepSeek products



The US Department of Homeland Security ordered federal civilian agencies to remove software from Chinese AI startup DeepSeek from their IT systems.

The directive follows growing privacy concerns regarding DeepSeek's data policies, which require personal user prompts and uploaded documents to be stored directly on servers located in China. — Reuters

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

EU, UK reaffirm strategic partnership



The European Union highlighted the importance of strengthening its strategic partnership with the United Kingdom ahead of their upcoming summit.

European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič emphasised full implementation of existing withdrawal agreements as foundational to future cooperation, while seeking progress on trade, energy, youth mobility, and shared economic security. — Reuters

OPINION

What role does science plays in nuclear diplomacy?



AZIZA AL MUGHAIRY
almughairypps@gmail.com

The writer is a postgraduate candidate at the Vienna School of International Studies

DIPLOMACY has long concerned itself with trade, territorial disputes, alliances and the management of conflict. These responsibilities endure, but the questions facing foreign ministries increasingly demand scientific understanding.

Artificial intelligence, nuclear technology, water security, energy and public health all require decision-making wherein technical dimensions cannot be separated from their political consequences. Science must therefore have a substantive place within foreign policy.

Scientists ought to be embedded in foreign ministries, contributing from the earliest stages of policy (including foreign policy) development and negotiation. Their involvement should extend beyond the occasional consultation or the arrival of a white paper after the principal decisions have already been made.

This is the purpose of science for policy: bringing scientific evidence bear upon decisions that affect societies, nations and their respective relations between states. Carefully selected specialists can support technical due diligence, assess competing claims, explain uncertainty and advise on whether proposed commitments are feasible. Their expertise should help shape the

questions being asked, alongside the answers being considered. Nuclear diplomacy makes this need particularly clear. Negotiations may turn on what can be measured, what an inspection can establish which activities can be verified. Political assurances gain credibility when agreements provide workable means of assessing compliance.

The International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) safeguards illustrate this connection between international obligations and technical verification.

A diplomat need not become a physicist. Equally, a physicist cannot be expected to navigate every legal and political dimension of a negotiation without preparation. Effective teams require both forms of expertise, with scientists given meaningful opportunities to influence proposals and diplomats equipped to understand the evidence informing them. There is also a diplomatic value in scientific relationships themselves.

During the Cold War, Pugwash brought scientists and scholars from opposing sides into dialogue about the dangers of the nuclear age. Such exchanges demonstrate how professional relationships can provide additional channels of communication across political divisions, even when official relations are strained.

The strength of science lies in the discipline of testing claims against evidence, acknowledging uncertainty and correcting

Artificial intelligence, nuclear technology, water security, energy and public health all require decision-making wherein technical dimensions cannot be separated from their political consequences. Science must therefore have a substantive place within foreign policy.

conclusions when findings change. Scientists have a responsibility to communicate honestly, including when the evidence challenges a preferred policy position.

That responsibility deserves institutional protection. Nationally, this provides an opportunity to connect scientific education with diplomatic service. Graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics could receive training in international law, negotiation and regional affairs. Through specialist appointments and secondments, they could contribute to foreign policy and support mediation, through a fourth pillar of science diplomacy, the Muscat Model, involving technically complex issues.

Their participation should begin when objectives are defined, continue as proposals are developed and extend into implementation Sustained involvement of scientific advice would guarantee continuity and allow specialists to understand the diplomatic context in which their knowledge is applied. Nuclear diplomacy offers hope because it demands that states find ways to manage existential security challenges through dialogue and credible commitments.

Embedding scientists within that process would strengthen the foundations of negotiation. Internationally, investing in people who can connect evidence with diplomacy could make a valuable contribution to international security.

MARKETS’ SQUEAL IS MUSIC TO FED EARS — BUT STILL TOO FAINT

MIKE DOLAN

If Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh is happy to let financial markets do some of the central bank’s work, he should be pleased with the recent selloff in stocks and bonds. But the recent tightening in financial conditions is far from enough to let him off the hook.

The new Fed boss has repeatedly made clear that overall access to finance shows little sign of being restricted by the central bank, despite an economy that has proven resilient and continues to generate uncomfortably fast price growth.

In his keynote speech at the Jackson Hole conference in August — a speech that clearly flagged the Fed’s first interest rate rise in three years last month — Warsh detailed aspects of lending, credit and market behaviour that suggested prevailing Fed policy was simply not tight enough.

“On balance, I would be hard-pressed to describe broad financial conditions as restrictive”, he said then. The question for investors is whether that’s still the case, and whether higher bond yields, wider credit spreads and stock-market volatility since August have tightened financial conditions enough to keep the Fed at bay. The answer seems to be “not yet”.

But a cat-and-mouse game between markets and Fed expectations may now play out over what could be a bumpy year-end.

The Chicago Fed’s National Financial Conditions Index (NFCI) is one place to see the overall impact of recent market turbulence.

By the end of last week, it had risen to the tightest level since April, while the Goldman Sachs equivalent had hit its tightest since March.

That shows the greater difficulty in raising debt or equity since the Fed hiked rates and catapulted expectations for further rate rises higher over the coming year.

Underlying price shifts since Warsh’s Jackson Hole appearance show where that’s been felt most.

Even though it is well off its recent 24-year peak, the benchmark 10-year Treasury yield is still up almost 50 basis points over the intervening two months. Thirty-year fixed mortgage rates are up 70 bps and US junk bond risk spreads have widened by almost 100 bps.

Reflecting the mortgage squeeze, housebuilding sentiment as measured by the National Association of Home Builders fell this month to its lowest level in 14-1/2 years.

Crude oil futures are up more than 20% over the past two months and the dollar is up almost 3%.

Buoyant stock indexes, riding the AI boom, had offset edgier credit and debt markets for the past year or more — until last week. But that’s no longer happening, with the S&P 500 and tech-heavy Nasdaq basically unchanged since Jackson Hole. — Reuters

Why systems matter more than slogans

INNOVATION has become one of the most

frequently used words in modern government. It appears in national strategies, institutional plans, executive speeches and performance frameworks. Yet behind this enthusiasm lies an uncomfortable economic question: How much of what we call innovation actually improves productivity, reduces costs or creates value?

An institution may organise innovation competitions, establish dedicated departments and reward creative employees without fundamentally changing how it operates. Another may introduce a modest improvement to a licensing procedure, eliminate unnecessary approvals and save thousands of working hours annually.

Which institution is more innovative? From an economic perspective, the answer should be obvious. Innovation is not measured by the visibility of its activities, but by the value of its outcomes. This distinction matters particularly for governments seeking economic diversification.

While investment in infrastructure, technology and human capital remains essential, the productivity of public institutions also influences the wider economy. Every administrative delay carries a cost. Every duplicated procedure consumes resources. Every unpredictable decision introduces uncertainty for businesses and investors.

Government efficiency, therefore, is not merely an administrative concern. It is part of a country’s economic competitiveness.

THE HIDDEN ECONOMICS OF BUREAUCRACY

Consider a hypothetical government service requiring five separate approvals. Each approval may appear justified when examined independently. Collectively, however, they can create delays, additional transactions and



DR ZIAD ALZAIDI
alzaidi.z2000@gmail.com

The writer is strategic management & organisational transformation consultant, United Kingdom and Sultanate of Oman

An institution may organise innovation competitions, establish dedicated departments and reward creative employees without fundamentally changing how it operates. Another may introduce a modest improvement to a licensing procedure, eliminate unnecessary approvals and save thousands of working hours annually.

unnecessary administrative expenditure.

Now imagine redesigning the service around a single decision process, supported by shared data and clearly assigned accountability. The innovation is not necessarily the technology used to deliver the service. It is the institutional redesign that makes several steps unnecessary.

This reveals an often-overlooked source of economic growth: improving how existing resources are organised.

Countries do not increase productivity exclusively by acquiring more advanced technologies. They also do so by reducing friction between institutions, accelerating decisions and allowing businesses to redirect time and capital towards productive activity.

A government that simplifies procedures can create economic value without necessarily increasing public expenditure.

CULTURE CREATES POSSIBILITIES; SYSTEMS DELIVER RESULTS

Organisational culture undoubtedly matters. Employees need confidence to question established practices, propose alternatives and learn from unsuccessful experiments. But culture alone cannot sustain innovation.

An employee may identify an inefficient procedure and suggest an excellent solution.

Without a decision-making mechanism, an accountable owner, a testing process and the authority to implement change, that idea may remain trapped in a presentation. The real challenge is connecting creativity to execution.

This thinking is reflected in the OECD’s 2019 Declaration on Public Sector Innovation, which recognises innovation as a strategic function of government rather than an occasional activity. It is also consistent with ISO 56001:2024, which establishes requirements for managing innovation systematically.

Both point towards a fundamental institutional lesson: innovation

requires more than encouragement.

It requires management capability. However, building that capability does not automatically mean establishing another department. A government organisation with an elaborate innovation office may achieve less than one that embeds experimentation, collaboration and continuous improvement into its existing operations.

The objective is not to institutionalise the department of innovation. It is to institutionalise the ability to innovate.

FROM INNOVATION BUDGETS TO INNOVATION PORTFOLIOS

An economically disciplined approach begins by asking a different question.

Instead of asking how much money should be allocated to innovation, leaders should ask which problems are expensive enough, persistent enough or strategically important enough to justify experimentation.

This shifts attention from funding activities to investing in outcomes. A practical innovation portfolio might include improvements to existing services, solutions to cross-government coordination problems and carefully selected experiments addressing future challenges.

Not every initiative should succeed. Experimentation necessarily involves uncertainty. But failure should be inexpensive, informative and identified early.

Small pilots, defined evaluation criteria and clear decisions about whether to expand, redesign or discontinue an initiative can protect public resources while encouraging learning.

The greater financial risk may not be a failed experiment. It may be allowing an inefficient process to continue unquestioned for another decade.

MEASURING WHAT THE ECONOMY ACTUALLY GAINS

Innovation performance should ultimately be evaluated through outcomes that matter beyond the institution itself.

CLASSIFIEDS

MALYA ALI
MASOUD has
lost Tanzanian
Passport No
TAE277238.
Finder please
handover to ROP.



IZDIHAR_INFO

ART/LIFE



Oman’s first female equestrian with Down Syndrome > 20

NINE NIGHTS

EXPATS CELEBRATE NAVRATRI WITH PRAYERS, FESTIVITIES



Photo by Gangesh Vadakkethil

KABEER YOUSUF

Expatriates living in the Sultanate of Oman, predominantly from India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, are celebrating Navaratri, the nine nights dedicated to prayers and the celebration of the victory of good over evil.

From community halls in Ghala and Darsait to auditoriums in Suhar and Salalah, the air is filled with the sound of conch shells, devotional songs, and the jingle of ghungroos as the celebrations come alive in Oman. The spirit has once again transformed the Sultanate of Oman into a vibrant canvas of devotion, dance, and culture, proving that faith knows no borders.

For the expatriate communities in Oman, Navaratri is not just a religious ritual; it is a homecoming. Several expat associations, various temple committees, and cultural organisations have lined up nine days of programmes and their culmination on the ninth day. The celebrations include daily pooja (prayers), Bommai Golu (displays of dolls narrating stories from epics are arranged on several steps), and classical dance recitals.

What makes Navaratri in Oman special is its inclusivity. These celebrations bring together people from different states, languages, and even nationalities. Children who born and brought up in Oman get to learn about their roots through workshops on Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam, and Carnatic music organised as part of the festival.

“We are happy to celebrate Navaratri with lots of festivities, which include dances and recitals, thanks to the Sultanate of Oman and the government that supports various beliefs”, said Sreelakshmy, a danseuse and teacher who runs ‘Keharwa’, a group that embodies Oman’s traditional folklore and Indian dance forms.

As the chenda (traditional musical drum) beats and devotional songs continue until Vijayadashami, the festival reinforces a powerful message: culture travels with people, and in the warm sands of Oman, the celebrations are reborn with the same devotion as in the valleys of Kerala. Navaratri is primarily celebrated in India and Nepal, where it is known as Dashain, as well as in countries with large Hindu and South Asian diaspora communities. Indians celebrate the festival nationwide with diverse regional traditions, like Garba and Dandiya in Gujarat and Maharashtra, Puja in West Bengal and Assam, Golu in Tamil Nadu, and Ramlila in North India. In Bangladesh, Navaratri is celebrated by Hindus with prayers, fasting, and community pandals.

QUICK FEATURES



RUNWAY

Rosie Huntington-Whiteley gets ready backstage before the Victoria's Secret fashion show in California, US. — Reuters



CELEBRITY

Jacob Elordi attends the Sixth Annual Academy Museum Gala in Los Angeles, US. — Reuters



ART

Sculpture titled 'Surface Breach' by artist Andre Braun on the opening day of the 'Sculpture by the Sea' outdoor exhibition in Bondi, Sydney, Australia. — Reuters

INSTA PICKS



Windsor town centre ready for His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's State visit



Garganey in Salalah

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CHINESE FILM WEEK KICKS OFF IN OMAN



The Chinese Film Week in Oman will be held from October 21 to 24 at VOX Cinemas, Mall of Oman, in Muscat, with an opening event on October 21. Jointly organised by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Oman, the Oman Film Society and the China Film Administration, the event aims to promote cultural exchange and mutual learning between the two countries. This year's theme is "Stories Across Borders". The programme features seven Chinese films: A Tapestry of a Legendary Land, Crossing, B for Busy, The Wandering Earth 2, I Am What I Am 2, Dear You and The Shadow's Edge. Their genres range from dance drama, war and history to urban romance, science fiction, animation, family drama and action suspense, showcasing contemporary Chinese cinema. Five titles — A Tapestry of

a Legendary Land, Crossing, B for Busy, I Am What I Am 2 and Dear You — will be screened in Oman for the first time. The Wandering Earth 2 and The Shadow's Edge, previously released in the country, return for special screenings during the film week. The event will showcase China's cultural heritage and shared human experiences through film. Organisers hope the screenings will strengthen understanding between Chinese and Omani audiences and deepen cultural and artistic ties between the two countries. Film fans and anyone interested in Chinese culture are invited to attend the four-day event. Screening schedules and ticket information are available through the social media accounts of the Chinese Embassy in Oman and the Oman Film Society.

‘Delusion’ steals the show as EU film festival closes



MOHAMED AL BATTASHI

DELUSION DIRECTED by Issa al Subhi, won Best Film in the short film competition as the third European Union Film Festival concluded on Sunday at Cinépolis, Oman Avenues Mall. Forbidden Flowers, written and directed by Dalila al Dari, won Best Director, while Higuita, directed by Nilanjana, took Best Storyline. The Audience Award, voted for by festival viewers, went to The Search, directed by Anirban Ray. Students were also honoured in a 48-hour challenge, with awards presented by the General Manager of Nikon. Nazar of the National University took first place with Fathers Luban, followed by Mahmoud al Balushi of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences with A Different Eye, and Younus al Ghafri of the National University with A Simple Gesture. In the short film competition, the Best Film, Best Director and Best Storyline winners each received RO 500. The evening ended with a screening of winning films.

Oman's emerging filmmakers took the spotlight at the third European Union Film Festival, with 'Delusion' winning Best Film and student talent recognised through a 48-hour filmmaking challenge.

Introduced for the first time this year, the competition gave filmmakers in Oman a platform to share their work with a wider audience. The finalists' films were screened for the public from October 12 to 14, allowing viewers to watch local stories on the big screen alongside European cinema. The closing ceremony was attended by ambassadors of European Union member states and representatives of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the Oman Film Society. It included a welcome address on behalf of the EU embassies and a speech from the ministry, alongside the presentation of awards. Laura al Siyabi, Head of the Cinema Section at the Theatre and Cinema Department of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, said it was a pleasure to be part of "this celebration of cinema and the stories that bring us closer together". Supporting cultural initiatives such as the festival matters, she said. "The Ministry believes in the power of culture to create connections, inspire creativity, and build bridges between people and nations".

She thanked the European Union and all those who made the festival possible, adding: "May the stories we share through cinema continue to bring us closer, even when our worlds are different". Organised by the European Union Delegation and the embassies of EU member states in Muscat, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Oman Film Society and the International Film Foundation of Oman, the week-long festival opened on October 11 with A Whole Life, an Austrian film based on the novel by Robert Seethaler. Over eight days, it brought films from Austria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania and Spain to Muscat audiences, with Arabic and English subtitles accompanying the screenings. More than a showcase of films, the festival offered a meeting point for filmmakers, diplomats, students, media professionals and cinema enthusiasts, strengthening cultural ties between Oman and Europe.

FEATURES

BREAKING
BARRIERS

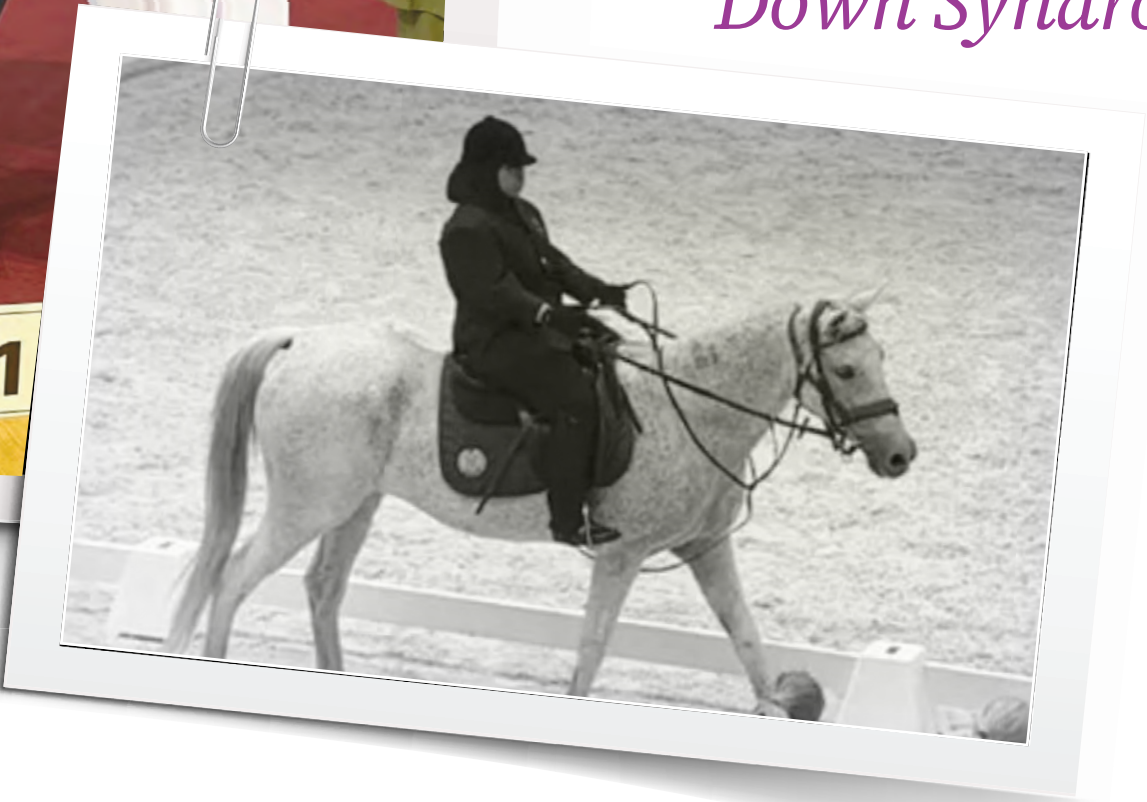
Oman's
1ST



Maitha al Busaidi's passion for horse riding has helped her build confidence and overcome challenges.



With encouragement from her family and coaches, Maitha returned to riding after a fall.



female equestrian with
Down Syndrome

IDRIS AL BALUSHI

FOR Maitha al Busaidi, falling from a horse was not the end of her equestrian journey. It was a moment that tested her determination and strengthened her resolve to continue pursuing a passion that has brought her confidence, happiness and achievement.

An Omani equestrian, television presenter and poet living with Down syndrome, Maitha has embraced different creative and sporting pursuits, demonstrating how encouragement and perseverance can help people discover their abilities.

Her love for horses began long before she became a competitor. After experiencing horse riding for the first time, she found herself drawn to the sport, looking forward to every opportunity to ride and train. Gradually, equestrianism

became an important part of her life. The journey was not without challenges. Initially, she experienced some fear, while training required patience and time. The encouragement of her family and coaches helped her overcome her hesitation and develop greater confidence.

“They always encouraged me and told me, ‘You can do it’. This gave me great motivation”, she said.

Beyond the sport itself, horse riding has taught Maitha to be braver and believe in herself. Her determination was particularly evident after a fall that could have discouraged her from returning to the saddle.

Following medical examinations, she decided she wanted to continue riding. Her perseverance eventually led her to compete in the Middle East and North Africa Championship, where she won gold, silver and bronze medals.

“I was very happy and proud of myself”, she said, recalling



The Omani equestrian won gold, silver and bronze medals at the Middle East and North Africa Championship.

the achievement.

For Maitha, these victories represent more than medals. They reflect the value of persistence and the importance of continuing despite setbacks. Her experience has also shaped her belief that people with Down syndrome should be encouraged to explore their interests and discover their potential through sport.

“Anyone who has a talent should try and not be afraid”, she said, emphasising the importance of support and encouragement in helping people achieve their goals.

Her ambitions extend beyond equestrianism. As a television presenter, Maitha enjoys speaking with people, discovering new stories and introducing audiences to different experiences. Through her work, she hopes to highlight the talents of people with disabilities and encourage others to pursue their aspirations.

Poetry provides another

outlet, allowing her to express her thoughts and emotions. Each pursuit offers something different, whether the excitement of competition, the opportunity to connect with others or the freedom of creative expression.

As Oman celebrates Omani Women's Day, Maitha's story highlights the diverse talents and achievements of Omani women.

Her journey challenges assumptions about disability, showing that opportunities to participate, develop skills and succeed should be accessible to everyone.

Her message to anyone hesitant to follow a dream is straightforward: try, and if you fail, try again.

“Do not say, ‘I cannot’. Say, ‘I can’ and keep trying”, she said. For Maitha, every fall is an opportunity to rise again, and every achievement is a reminder of what determination can make possible.